

# Breast Augmentation

(Breast Implants) | Patient Information

## What is Breast Augmentation?

Breast augmentation is a surgical procedure involving the use of implants to enlarge the breasts. The surgery is typically recommended for patients who are dissatisfied with their breast size and shape.

Implants can be successful in increasing volume in breasts that have always been small and in filling out breasts that used to be larger and have changed due to life events such as pregnancy or weight loss. Breast augmentation will reshape breasts to some extent. The procedure can also be used to correct breasts that are of unequal size.

## Is the procedure right for me?

A detailed consultation with your consultant plastic Surgeon is essential prior to undergoing any surgical procedure. During the consultation, your Surgeon will discuss your area/s of concern, desired improvements, options available (including no treatment at all) and expected outcomes. You will be examined, and measurements taken of your breasts. Some discussion will follow about implant shapes and possible sizes and the position of the pockets that are to be made for the implants to sit in behind your existing breast tissue. You will be given a 'cooling-off' period of at least 2 weeks between initial consultation and the date of your operation to ensure you have ample time to reflect on all aspects of the procedure before proceeding (although please bear in mind the waiting lists for our Surgeons mean this period is invariably significantly longer).

## How is the correct implant chosen?

Implants have been used for over 40 years to increase the volume and improve the shape of the breasts. It is essential to choose an implant from a trusted manufacturer with the reassurance of an effective warranty and good long term scientific data on safety and durability. A wide range of implants are available that can be used to reshape the breast; from simply adding subtle volume to adding more significant fullness and volume. Implants come in a variety of different shapes and sizes. Usually made from silicone, they can be filled with different densities of gel in order to form an implant that matches your specific needs. In selecting an implant, your Surgeon will carefully assess your breasts, taking note of your chest dimensions and overall build. The Surgeon will then discuss your desires for final breast shape and volume, and after thorough consideration, the final implant will be selected. It is never wise to exceed the recommended width of an implant, as this may lead to an

unusually proportioned breast with displacement of the nipple from the centre of the breast. Implants are now much more durable and are manufactured to a very high standard. Rigid quality control measures are in place to ensure consistency. Whilst this has made them much safer than in the past, they should not be considered to last a lifetime. Eventually, they wear out and consequently may require replacement. It is therefore imperative that you fully understand the long-term implications of having breast implants. During the consultation process with your Surgeon, the likelihood of developing problems will be discussed thoroughly. The most important part of a breast augmentation procedure is the careful planning and implant selection that occurs before the operation itself.

## How is the procedure carried out?

Should breast augmentation be agreed upon as the most suitable treatment, the procedure will be carried out by your Surgeon in our state-of-the-art operating theatre. The surgical insertion of breast implants is generally straightforward and takes around two hours to perform. A small incision is made under the breast and situated so that the resultant fine scar will sit within or slightly above the breast crease. A "pocket" is then created to the exact dimensions of the implant; either above or partly beneath the chest muscle. The muscle should be considered as a means to add an extra layer of tissue to effectively disguise the implant. Therefore, it follows that if you are thin with little natural breast tissue you would be better served by placing the implant under the muscle so that the edges of the implant are less visible. If you have a naturally fuller figure, the natural breast tissue will provide adequate cover. The implants are then carefully inserted and accurately positioned to ensure that they are sitting as intended. Internal stitches are occasionally used to maintain implant position. The skin edges are then closed with dissolvable stitches and very light dressings are applied. Surgeons often combine these two routes, placing the implants partly behind the breast and partly behind the muscle. Through this combined approach, Surgeons try to give patients the benefits of both techniques. This is called a dual plane augmentation. If implants are inserted behind the muscle, they are likely to move when the muscle contracts. This is called animation and is normal.

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## Aftercare

The surgery is usually performed as a day case under a general anaesthetic or twilight anaesthesia. Our highly experienced medical team will be on hand during your stay to care for your needs. After breast augmentation surgery, it is normal to be a little tender over the chest area. Normally, you will need a couple of weeks off work and will need to avoid vigorous exercise for around six weeks. It is common for the surgical site/s to ooze a little, this is usually associated with the local anaesthetic discharging but can look a little pink. Swelling at the treatment site should be expected for at least 10 days. Light exercise may be recommenced immediately. Showering is permitted on the second post-operative day. It is essential to wear the provided post-operative garments during the day and at night in the weeks following the surgery. The implants can take a few weeks to settle into position and it is quite normal for them to look a little high initially. This tends to settle after the first six weeks, but you will not get your long-term result for 3-4 months after the operation as a more natural shape emerges. Scars tend to be quite red in the first 6 weeks, turning to purple over the next 3 months and then fading to white. Most patients will form good quality scars over time.

## Risks and Complications

All surgical procedures are associated with risks. Your Surgeon will explain these in detail during initial consultation, enabling you to reach an informed decision on whether you wish to proceed. Serious complications are uncommon, however patients should be aware of the following complications prior to undergoing breast augmentation-

- Anaesthesia risks
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Changes in nipple or breast sensation
- Poor scarring of skin
- Wrong or faulty position of implant
- Implant leakage or rupture
- The formation of tight scar tissue around the implant (capsular contracture)
- Fluid accumulation (seroma)
- Wrinkling of skin over the implant
- Pain, which may persist
- Possibility of revisional surgery

## Other Considerations

- Breast implants are not guaranteed to last a lifetime and future surgery may be required to replace one or both implants
- Pregnancy, weight fluctuations and menopause may influence the appearance of augmented breasts over the course of your lifetime
- Breast augmentation requires regular examinations of breast health to evaluate the condition of your implants

## Results

The results of breast augmentation are immediately visible. Over time, post surgical swelling will subside and incision lines will fade. Satisfaction with your new image should continue to grow as you fully recover from surgery. In order to achieve optimal results it is important that you follow your Surgeon's post-operative instructions and follow-up visits.

## Cost

Prices for breast augmentation can vary. Costs may include-

- Anaesthesia fees
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Medical tests
- Post-surgery garments
- Prescriptions for medication
- Surgeon's fee

After consultation and if you are planning to proceed with surgery, you will be given a written quotation regarding the cost of the planned procedure.

## Alternative treatments

The only alternative surgical technique to enlarge the breast is fat transfer or 'lipofilling'. This is a technique where fat is removed by liposuction from another area of the body such as the hips, thighs or tummy and then injected into the breast area. Only a relatively small amount of fat can be injected so most patients will require multiple operations to bring about a worthwhile effect. This is a much more gradual approach compared with implant-based breast augmentation, but does avoid having a breast implant.

**If you experience any problems or have concerns following surgery, please do not hesitate to call our direct patient line for assistance on 07908 891059.**

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## Pre-Operative Preparations

### 6 week period before surgery-

Patients requiring twilight or general anaesthesia should not travel long haul for the six week period before and 6 week period after surgery.

### 4 weeks before surgery-

Preferably, stop taking the contraceptive pill and HRT 4 weeks before surgery.

### 2 weeks before surgery-

We would recommend that you start taking Arnica anti-bruising tablets, three times a day, two weeks prior to and two weeks after surgery. These are available from several health and wellbeing stores, including Holland & Barratt.

### 1 week before surgery-

Avoid Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Nurofen and other similar painkillers one week before and two weeks after surgery. Paracetamol is the safest painkiller to take, if necessary.

Stop taking Vitamin E and its compounds (such as evening primrose oil, fish oils, garlic and garlic capsules) one week before surgery and two weeks after surgery. Taking Vitamin E in any form can cause bleeding and post-operative complications.

### 1 day before and on the day of surgery-

Shower with Hibiscrub antiseptic liquid soap (provided on prescription from Coppergate Clinic) the day before and morning of your surgery before coming into the clinic. Do not apply moisturiser after showering.

### Day of surgery-

**You must avoid eating solid food and milky drinks for 6 hours prior to your appointment for sedation. Water, clear drinks, black tea and black coffee can be consumed for up to 2 hours before your sedation/general anaesthetic.**

**You must take your routine medicines at the usual time, unless advised otherwise and bring them with you (including inhalers).**

**At least one nail must be free from acrylic or nail polish nails as a monitor will be placed on a finger.**

## Post-Operative Instructions

### Average length of stay-

The surgery will be performed as a day case under a general anaesthetic or twilight anaesthesia unless your Surgeon advised otherwise during consultation. **If you live further than a 1 hour drive from the clinic, it is mandatory to stay in the vicinity until the following day.**

### 6 week period after surgery-

Patients requiring twilight or general anaesthesia should not travel long haul for the 6 week period before and 6 week period after surgery.

### 0-2 weeks after surgery

- It is essential to ensure activity is kept to a minimum and to rest as much as possible
- Wear the provided TED stockings day and night, except for when showering
- Shower if you wish, but please be as quick as possible and do not linger. Dressings should be gently patted dry before the compression garment is put back on. At your follow up appointment, your surgeon will guide you on when leisurely showers and baths may resume
- Upper body activities should be kept to a minimum
- Paracetamol can be taken as required

### 0-6 weeks after surgery

- Wear the provided compression garment day and night, except for when showering (except in the case of teardrop shape implants, when the garment must be worn day and night for the full 12 week period)
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### 2 weeks after surgery onwards

- Gentle activity may resume (for example driving) but do listen to your body- it will tell you if you are overdoing things

### 6-12 weeks after surgery

- Swimming and more strenuous exercise may resume, as advised by your surgeon at your follow up appointment

### 12 weeks after surgery onwards

- Underwired bras can be worn if preferred
- The scar and surrounding breast skin can be moisturised daily

### General Scar Care

Scars should be supported by micropore tape for the first 2 weeks post-surgery. During this period, tape should be left on during baths and showers and simply patted dry afterwards. After 2 weeks, as soon as the tape naturally starts to become loose, it may be gently removed and discarded.

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