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AUTUMN 2007 \$7.50

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ISSN 1832-4177

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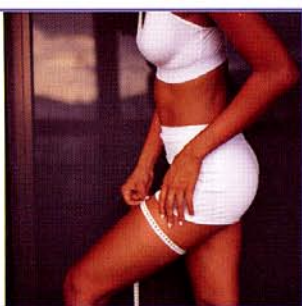


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ART • WINE • TRAVEL • FINANCE • EVENTS • BOOKS • INTERIORS

Beauty and the Knife

Dr Patrick Briggs



Augmentation mammoplasty

Augmentation mammoplasty – colloquially called a boob job – is the operation where artificial means are used to increase the size of breasts or improve their shape. It is the most common cosmetic surgery procedure in Australia.

An augmentation can be achieved using silicone gel, saline, a mixture of silicone and saline prosthesis or newer varieties such as hydrogel. The implants have a thick, outer silicone-rubber shell with either smooth or textured surfaces. Silicones, which are a type of plastic, have been used in many types of medical devices implanted into the body for decades. The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic in hospital and usually requires only a one night stay but can sometimes be done as a day case.

There are various surgical approaches: under the breast, through the arm pit or through the nipple. Surgical approach pros and cons are discussed at the pre-op consultation.

Post-operatively the breasts will be a little tender for a few days and you will be advised to limit movement for the first 48 hours. Light lower limb exercises may be resumed after a week and unlimited exercise after three weeks. It's also recommended an underwire bra is not worn for the first week.

Complications following breast augmentation are few but may be significant. A haematoma or collection of blood under the breast may occur in the first 24 hours after surgery, which is why movement is initially limited. If a haematoma develops another visit to the operating theatre to remove the clot will be required. This will not affect long term results.

Infection is a risk after any surgery as a result of a foreign substance in the body. The breast prosthesis might be removed until the infection settles down and then re-inserted. Permanent alteration in nipple sensation is a possibility but rare. It is difficult to predict the life of an implant as some have lasted 30 years or longer.

The most common complication after breast augmentation is capsular contraction. This is hardening of the internal scar around the prosthesis which can vary from slight to severe. If it causes severe pain or deformity it will require the removal of the implant and a replacement.

Capsular contraction seems to occur more commonly in smooth walled prostheses and may occur on one side or both sides after only a few weeks or after as long as 15 years. The contraction itself is actually a normal occurrence but it is the hardness which is considered a complication. There are no contra-indications to flying and scuba diving post-breast augmentation.

Despite the prior moratorium on silicone breast augmentation (lifted in the US in 2006), there is no scientific evidence to suggest there is any link between silicone breast augmentation and human health or disease. Silicone is present in artificial heart valves and pacemakers, syringes and many other medical devices as well as food packaging, lipsticks and cosmetics. There is also no causal link between breast augmentation and breast cancer.

**For more information: email: admin@drbriggs.com.au
or visit www.cosmetic-plastic-surgery.com.au**