

## **Breast Augmentation**

Women have breast augmentation for reasons as unique and personal as the individual choosing the surgery. Many women choose breast augmentation to enlarge small breasts, change the shape of their breasts, balance uneven breasts, reconstruct the breast after mastectomy, or simply enhance their silhouette. The importance of the choice is in feeling good about you.

### **WHAT IS BREAST AUGMENTATION?**

Breast augmentation or augmentation mammoplasty is the surgical insertion of an implant behind the breast to increase the size and shape of the breast. The FDA has approved saline (salt-water) and silicone (gel) filled silicone shells implants for unrestricted use.

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

Any surgery has certain risks associated with anesthesia, incision, and suturing. Breast augmentation has certain additional risks due to the nature of the implants. Common risks are: rupture, which has many possible causes, and in saline implants will cause the implant to deflate (the body will naturally absorb the salt-water without causing damage to human tissue); capsular contracture, which occurs when scar tissue around the implant tightens causing the implant to harden; excessive bleeding following surgery, which will cause swelling and pain; and, in some women, an increase or decrease in nipple sensation. There are other less common risks that your doctor can discuss with you in consultation.

### **VARIATIONS OF BREAST AUGMENTATION**

Though breast augmentation is a straightforward procedure, there are certain variables involved. The size and shape of the implants will vary and affect other choices such as placement. Implants can be placed under the breast tissue or beneath the muscle of the chest wall. Incision placement can also vary and will result in a certain amount of scarring. Incisions can be made along the breast crease, under the arm, or around the areola.

If there is sagging in the breasts prior to surgery, your doctor may also suggest a breast lift procedure to produce a satisfactory result.

### **EXPECTATIONS**

Breast enhancement surgery can significantly alter your appearance. Having realistic expectations about breast augmentation is very important. Breast augmentation can improve self-confidence and self-esteem, but it is not a cure for any ailment. Talking to your doctor about your expectations is as important as any other medical factor. Women who are in good health both mentally and physically, and who do not smoke, are good candidates for breast augmentation.

### **THE CONSULTATION**

Your surgeon will evaluate your general health, the condition of your breasts, and your skin tone to determine the appropriate technique for the desired outcome of the surgery. You and the doctor should truthfully discuss your expectations, the limitations and risks of the surgery. Keeping a written list of questions to ask during your consultation is a good idea. Writing down the answers can also help you evaluate your options at a later time. The consultation is the appropriate time and place to ask the physician all of your questions and to bring up any concerns.

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### **SURGERY**

Breast augmentation surgery generally takes two hours. Absorbable stitches are used to close the area of incision. A front closing sports bra will be applied around the breast area to aid healing.

General anesthesia may be used so you are unconscious for the procedure. In some cases, surgery can be performed with a local anesthesia and a sedative. This surgery is normally performed on an outpatient basis (meaning the patient is released from the hospital the day of the surgery). Because of the anesthesia involved, you will need someone to drive you home after the surgery.

### **RECOVERY**

You may be drowsy and sore for up to 48 hours. Medication might be prescribed for pain as determined by your doctor. You will continue to wear a front closing sports bra for 4-6 weeks. Some swelling and discomfort may continue for three to five weeks. The recovery process should be discussed in detail during the initial consultation.