



Breast Implants

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

You may be thinking of having a breast implant to increase your breast size, modify the appearance of your breast or replace an existing implant. Perhaps you have had a mastectomy and are considering a breast implant to reconstruct a breast.

Before you decide to get breast implants, you should know:

- the risks and benefits of different types of implants
- changes to the shape of the breast may be irreversible
- the longer you have breast implants, the greater the chances that you will develop complications
- some of these complications will require more surgery
- breast implants are not lifetime devices and will need to be removed or replaced at some point

This information is not medical advice. Talk to your doctor or surgeon before you get a breast implant to discuss the benefits and risks and to consider all of your options.

After the operation, you should see your doctor if you:

- develop complications
- have concerns about your implant
- develop signs or symptoms related to breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- **Breast implants aren't designed to last a lifetime.**
- **You may need to replace an implant** if you have complications or are not satisfied (for example, its shape or size).
- **You should request a copy of the breast implant product registration card from your surgeon. The card contains information such as the manufacturer's name and the model and serial number of the implant.** This information is important as it will help you find out if you or your implants are affected by a product advisory or recall.



- **You can also request a copy of the detailed breast implant information provided by the manufacturer to your surgeon.**
- **You and your surgeon should sign an informed consent form.** This is important to acknowledge that your surgeon has explained the risks and benefits of the surgery and the implants.
- **You should ask your surgeon to provide details of the surgery in a letter to your family doctor or health care provider.** It's important to continue routine medical follow-up with a health care provider to detect any issues following surgery.

If your implants have ruptured, you should contact your health care provider as soon as possible to discuss treatment and follow-up options.

SOME QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR SURGEON BEFORE SURGERY

- What type of implant is the surgeon recommending and why?
- What other types of materials may be used in the surgery aside from the implant (for example, mesh, clips, patches)?
- What are the risks and possible side effects?
- What are the surgeon's credentials and experience with this operation and the surgeon's experience removing implants and scar capsules?
- What is the cost of the surgery?
 - the cost to remove or replace an implant
 - future costs related to treatment of potential implant-related complications
- When may replacement surgery be required?

Additional questions to ask your surgeon can be found [here](#).

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Immediately following surgery:

- pain
- swelling
- bleeding
- infection
- changes in nipple and breast sensation

In some cases, more surgery may be required:

- to treat an adverse event following the initial procedure
- due to dissatisfaction with the size or shape of the implant

Some of the adverse events include:

- incorrect positioning of the implant
- rupture (the implant shell breaks or tears)
- tightening or hardening of scar tissue around the implant (called capsular contracture)

On rare occasions, a woman may develop breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma (known as BIA-ALCL, which is a type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer of the immune system). Symptoms of BIA-ALCL can develop months or years after the implant surgery.

You should check your breasts regularly for any unusual changes, such as:

- sudden swelling or a lump
- redness, soreness or a rash
- dimpling, puckering or bulging of the skin
- a nipple that has changed position or an inverted nipple (pushed inward)

Discuss any signs or symptoms with your health care provider and [report them](#) to Health Canada.

Additional risks and possible adverse events, including more information on BIA-ALCL, can be found [here](#).

Learn more about [breast implants](#).
