

RealSelf[®]

MEMBER GUIDES

Written By
Walnut
Creek

10 Things I Wish I'd Known Before Breast Augmentation

Walnut Creek, a RealSelf member, shares her tips on what it's like to go through breast augmentation. Get more advice, read reviews and look at before and after photos and more at [RealSelf](#).

Recently I had breast implant surgery ([see my story](#)). Here are 10 things I wish I'd known before surgery. Hopefully they will help some of the women on RealSelf considering the same procedure!

1. Be prepared to have the doctor throw you a curveball.

I did my homework, knew exactly what I wanted. I saw the doctor and he said "no, you can't go from 34A to 34B because your skin is too elastic and you need to go full C". I didn't think I needed a lift either and he pointed out that one breast was way lower than the other so I ended up trusting him and am really glad I did. Just go in there with an open mind and be prepared to revise your original plan.

2. Get ready at home beforehand.

A. Buy another bra (or 2) B. Wash all your laundry (have new sheets waiting for you!) C. Leave your house cleaned. If you are going to be home alone, have food and all medications handy so you don't strain yourself. D. Buy larger clothes for work beforehand

3. Drugs are your friends.

I went to a doctor that advertises no Vicodin required, just ibuprofen. But ask for something strong just in case. I did and on day two I took Vicodin.

Xanax really helped as well. I took that the day I came home because I was freaking out. My breasts looked so huge and felt so hard and I really thought I made a huge mistake. I was shaking! I was so nervous for about a week after surgery. Ask for Xanax!

4. It doesn't hurt to touch your breasts...

So touch them. They feel weird, but start slowly and it helps with the pain. I would just massage them and the pain went away without meds!

5. Bowling balls on your chest!

That's what it feels like at first. And a week later, it feels like your milk is coming in. If you've ever had babies, you know what I mean. Try to work out your back before surgery. I worked

Real Facts

Data below derived from RealSelf reviews at time of publication. Click on the respective facts to learn more.

Average Cost
\$6,600

Worth It
Rating
88%

Total Reviews
375

10 Things I Wish I Knew Before Getting Breast Augmentation

Collected and edited by Walnut Creek, a RealSelf community member

out for two months straight pre-op and I feel great at two weeks post op.

6. Go walking.

I walked the day after surgery and everyday since. Go very slow at first and never more than 30 minutes. I think the movement helps get the swelling go down. I always feel better afterwards.

7. You don't have to share if you don't want to.

I haven't told anyone about the surgery. So it's great that it's winter so I can camouflage my breasts. I also got eyelash extensions and did my hair differently. I feel so great right now, and it's because I am finally pampering myself. But I didn't feel the need to tell a soul.

8. Try not to drive for as long as possible.

I still get sore if I drive for too long and I'm 14 days post op!

9. Be still – take it easy.

I know it's hard, but find movies you need to catch up on, books you've been hoping to read, and take it easy for the first two weeks. I was told not to overexert myself for at least six weeks after breast implant surgery.

10. Call your doctor with every question you have.

You paid them, so make sure you get all your questions answered.

Get support and answers from a community of thousands of members who are considering or have gone through a cosmetic procedure and board certified doctors. RealSelf wants to help you make the right decision by offering:

- [Before and after photos](#) from doctors and patients
- [Treatment and doctor reviews](#) from everyday people
- A safe place to [ask board certified doctors questions](#)

The opinions expressed here are just one perspective. We encourage you to do your own research and talk with your doctor. Share what you learn with the community by writing reviews, commenting and discussing with other members.

RealSelf[®] DOCTOR GUIDES

Written By
Daniel C.
Mills, MD



6 Important Tips for Women Considering Breast Augmentation

Daniel C. Mills, MD, a board certified and active doctor on RealSelf wrote the article below based on his experience with liposuction. For more information visit the [RealSelf Breast Augmentation page](#).

1. How do I calculate what implant size I need in order to get from the cup size I am to the cup size I want to be?

The lingerie industry does not have standardized cup sizes, so it's important not to be too dependent on cup letter when choosing an implant size. Victoria's Secret, for marketing purposes, has generally a full cup size difference (larger) than other popular manufacturers. We also refer to ranges in a cup size, such as a small C or a large C cup. A B-C cup is around a total of 450 ccs. If you have 150 ccs of your own tissue, you will want to consider a 300 cc implant. If you are looking for a C-D cup, you will want a total of 600ccs (own tissue plus implant size) so you would be considering an implant about 450ccs. In my years of practice I've determined that an increase of 150-200ccs equals approximately one cup size.

One way to choose an implant size is to try on a "sizer" (an implant that you can insert into your bra to try on) and see how it looks in your clothes. Your board certified plastic surgeon or patient coordinator will help you choose an implant size for surgery that reflects the look that is achieved with the sizer that you like the best. You will need to be careful with this, however-If you are using a high profile sizer, it can appear to be larger volume than a lower profile sizer.

2. How do I choose the best implant size?

In my practice in Orange County, CA, I personally feel that the most attractive and reasonable choice is a middle C. This gives you the option to "dress" your breasts up and down based on the situation-they can be downplayed with conservative clothing and still look great in a sexier outfit when it is appropriate.

The right choice is not a simple formula. The best size for YOU will depend on your lifestyle, what you normally wear, where you live, and other cultural factors along with your height and weight. "Normal" or "best" are very relative terms. The average look in Southern CA is very different from the average look in the Mid-West. Some cultures will tolerate a C-D cup size as normal-another, such as Asian culture, may consider anything larger than a B to small C cup size as very large and distracting.

Real Facts

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Average Cost
\$6,500

Worth It
Rating
85%

Total Reviews
237

6 Important Tips for Women Considering Breast Augmentation

Written By Daniel C. Mills, MD

Your own physique will also dictate what will look proportional. If you are built like a ballerina, tall and slim, large implants will seem out of place. What you wear, and the level of activity that you have throughout the day will affect what makes sense in your real life. If you spend most of your time in business attire with a blazer, an increase in your breast size will not be very noticeable.

Your personality plays into this choice also. If you tend to be gregarious and outgoing, larger implants may suit you more than if you are shy and don't want to call attention to yourself.

Take an outfit that you wear in your career, sports, casual life and in special occasions to your consultation so that you can try out your potential new look in your own clothes. You can also take an outfit you'd love to look great in if you had the breast size you desire.

Surveys have found that nationally 70% of patients would go larger in size than they had the choice to do over again. You might want to keep this in mind if you're having a hard time choosing between two sizes.

3. Implant type and positioning of the implant

Each Board Certified Plastic Surgeon (double check that the certification is by The American Board of Plastic Surgery) will have their own preference when suggesting the type of implant, incision site and placement of the implant. There are advantages and disadvantages to each, and it's important that you take the time to review the information that you receive from each board certified surgeon that you interview to determine which surgical philosophy makes the most sense to you.

My preference is to use a smooth wall implant through an armpit incision (Transaxillary Subpectoral Augmentation Mammoplasty or TASP). I use both saline and silicone implants based on patient preference. I stress that this is my own personal preference.

Some patients are just not comfortable with the idea of having a silicone implant because of the question of safety if they break. Saline implants are a good option for those that are worried so that they have peace of mind. Saline implants are a bit harder to the touch. For patients with very little of their own breast tissue you may also be able to feel more rippling with the saline at the edge of the implant. If you have a moderate amount of your own breast tissue you will be less likely to have this problem. Silicone implants are softer to the touch and move more naturally, so most people feel they are the better aesthetic choice.

The reason to use a textured implant when placed on top of the muscle is to decrease the occurrence of capsular contracture. If you choose to have your implant below the muscle there is no difference in capsular contracture rate between smooth wall and textured.

When implants are placed under the muscle, it acts as your own internal "bra" and the weight of the implant will not cause sagging with your own breast tissue. I don't suggest putting implants on top of the muscle if you have drooping as it makes them droop more.

If you choose a shaped implant it will need to be a textured implant so that it stays in place and won't rotate or turn upside down.

There are essentially three different incision sites. Periareolar, or around the nipple areolar area, has a nice scar, but technically has a higher capsular contracture rate. Inframammary, or under the breast in the crease where the underwire of your bra would sit, is a bit more conspicuous scar. My preference, the Transaxillary, or armpit, incision leaves the best scar. Surgeons who have made this approach their specialty and perform it frequently usually perform this approach. It requires a special set of skills and significant practice.

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4. Breast implant safety

FDA studies show that breast augmentation is a safe and effective procedure. Your compliance with postoperative instruction plays an important part in achieving a great result and safe experience. Follow the instructions of your surgeon carefully!

5. How long they last

It's not possible to say exactly how long implants will last. Like anything man-made, they will wear out. Saline implants generally last about ten years, but they don't have to be replaced until they break. When they break it will become quickly apparent, as your breast will go flat. The saline that is in the implant will simply be absorbed and expelled by your body.

In my view it is prudent to replace silicone implants prophylactically at 10-15 years as you could have a silent leak. Yearly mammograms will be helpful to determine if you need to replace your implants earlier. MRIs can also help, but are more costly. Many women can feel a change in their breasts when doing self-exams if their implants break. I also encourage my patients to return to see me on an annual basis so that I can do a physical exam to detect a break early on.

Most ruptures are caused from a fold failure due to capsular contracture, so following your board certified surgeon's instructions carefully is very important. Most of the time if I see an implant break it is due to a capsular contracture. If there is no capsular contracture they usually last more than 10 years.

6. How do I choose a good Plastic Surgeon?

First and foremost, make sure you choose a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon. Ask about his training, experience and affiliations with organizations such as The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery and The American Society of Plastic Surgeons. Ask if your surgeon has privileges at local hospitals. If he does not, beware. Ask what his personal statistics are for capsular contracture rate and revision rate, and also how often he has a complication with hematoma or infection. Ask how he compares to the national average. He should know that rate. You will want to choose a surgeon that can tell you what the advantages and disadvantages are to the surgical options and will communicate well with you regarding what will best suit your needs. Ask what the office policy is for surgery fees if you have a complication or need revisional surgery. When you meet with your potential surgeon ask to see his before and after photos and if he has previous patients that would be willing to talk to you about their experience.

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