

10

THINGS YOU SHOULD
KNOW ABOUT LIFE
WITH BREAST IMPLANTS

Welcome to life with breast implants!

Now that you've had breast surgery, it is especially important to stay on top of your breast health. This guide will help you navigate breast health milestones, lifestyle changes, and other topics of interest in your life with breast implants. While your plastic surgeon should always be your first resource for important questions, you may find this guide helpful in answering some common questions and concerns.

Remember

- 1 ASK YOUR PLASTIC SURGEON FOR A COPY OF YOUR OPERATION REPORT.
- 2 KEEP ALL BREAST IMPLANT-RELATED DOCUMENTS IN A SAFE PLACE.
- 3 REFER BACK TO THIS INFORMATION IN THE FUTURE.

#1 Your plastic surgeon is your new best friend

Your plastic surgeon is the best resource for reliable information about breast implants. As you will be returning for follow-up care in the weeks, months, and years after surgery, remember to inform your plastic surgeon's office if your contact information changes.

Name of plastic surgeon:

Date of surgery:

Implant model:

Implant serial number(s):

Left:

Right:

A woman in a black sports bra and shorts is running on a sandy beach. She is wearing white sneakers and has her hair tied back. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

#2

You can still get your daily dose of endorphins

After surgery, ask your surgeon when you can begin exercising and about any precautions you should take. Once fully recovered and cleared for exercise, most patients may return to their active lifestyle. Understand where your implants are placed, behind the chest muscle or in front. Be cautious during any activity that puts pressure on your breasts or while doing strenuous

exercises. Wear a supportive bra and listen to your body; if an exercise causes swelling or discomfort, stop and notify your surgeon. Talk to your plastic surgeon about your new exercise routine or if you have any questions about certain activities. If you experience pain, contact your plastic surgeon right away.

A woman with long, wavy hair is smiling and looking down. She is wearing a white lace-trimmed top. The background is bright and out of focus.

#3

Your breasts' appearance may change

The breast contains fatty tissue and may respond to changes in your body similarly to how it may have responded prior to breast implants.

Factors that may affect the size/shape of your breasts:

- › Weight loss
- › Weight gain
- › Pregnancy
- › Breastfeeding
- › Aging and the effects of gravity/loss of skin elasticity

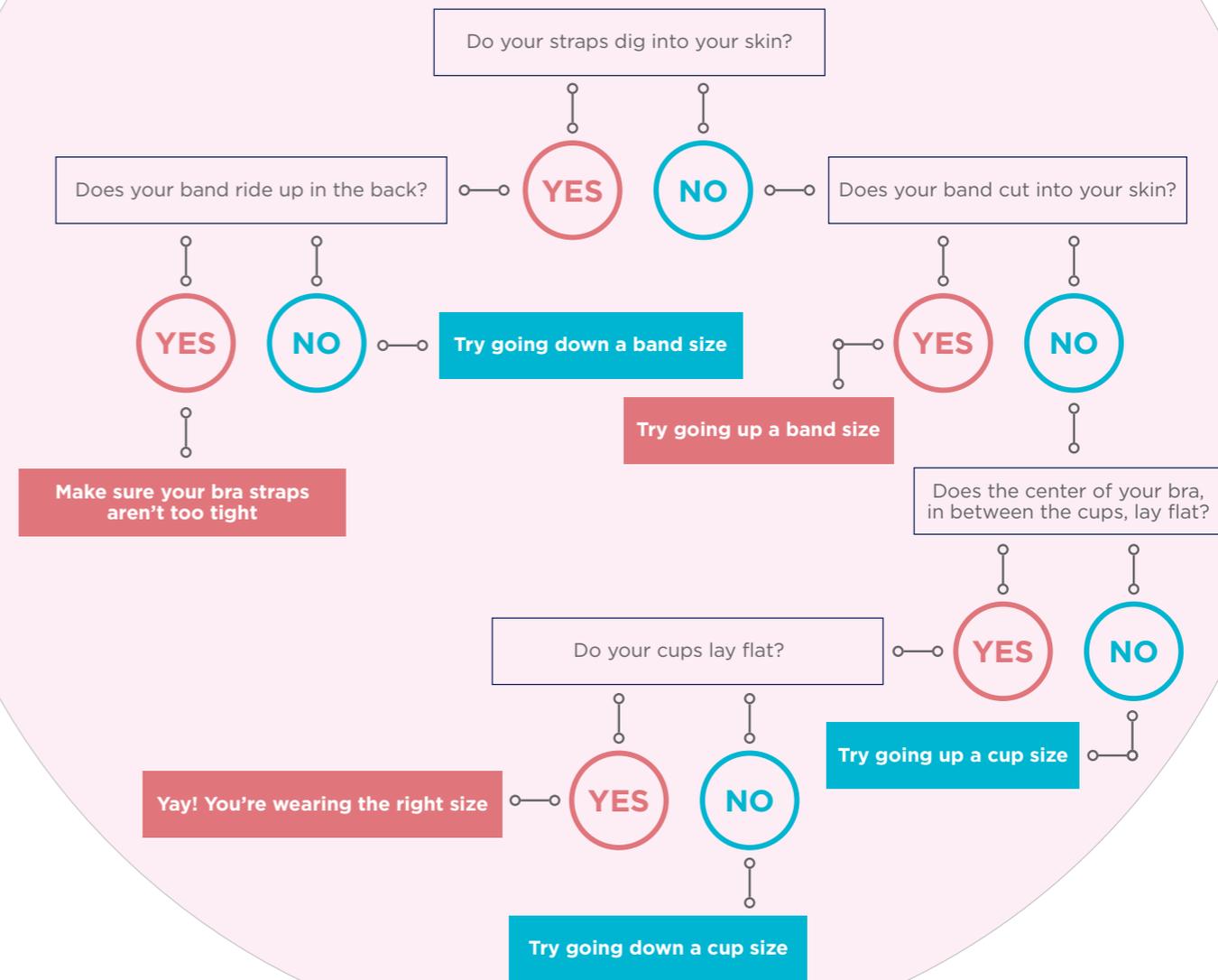
#4 Your bra drawer will need a makeover

Now that your breast size has changed, your bra drawer will likely need a refresh. Take this quiz to find out if you're wearing the right bra size.

DID YOU KNOW? Bra sizes can vary by brand and even style.

Are you wearing the right bra size?

Note: This quiz is just a guide. Other factors may apply. If your bra is uncomfortable, see an expert for a fitting.



#5 You may be curious about nursing with implants

Talk to your plastic surgeon, gynecologist, or lactation nurse if you have questions about breastfeeding with implants.

Note: For breast augmentation patients only.

Every woman's
experience may be different.

- › Breast implants may affect your ability to breastfeed either by reducing or eliminating milk production
- › Breastfeeding difficulties have been reported following breast surgery, including breast reduction and breast augmentation
- › A periareolar surgical approach may further increase the chance of breastfeeding difficulties
- › In a study of 78 women who attempted to breastfeed after breast augmentation surgery, 23% reported difficulties





#6

Do self-exams often to check in with your breasts

You will need to learn the new feel of your breasts with implants. It is possible that you could feel the edge of your implant. If you had a mastectomy for breast cancer, or a breast-lifting procedure, or reduction, your breast will feel different. You will need to learn your “new normal” so you will be aware of any changes.

Women are encouraged to perform a monthly self-exam for breast cancer, no matter their age.

With breast implants, self-examinations for breast cancer may feel different. Ask your doctor to help you distinguish the implant from your breast tissue.

#7

Get your breasts checked regularly by a professional

The FDA recommends women with silicone-filled implants undergo magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) screening 3 years after surgery, then every 2 years thereafter to evaluate the implants for possible rupture. If implant rupture is found on an MRI, the FDA recommends implant removal. For women who have had a mastectomy, routine-screening mammograms on reconstructed breasts may not be needed. Talk to your oncologist, breast surgeon, plastic surgeon, or other healthcare professional regarding your post-op care plan.

**RULE OUT
RUPTURES
WITH AN MRI**

**3
YEARS**

AFTER
SURGERY

THEN, EVERY

**2
YEARS**

AFTER THAT FOR AS
LONG AS YOU HAVE
BREAST IMPLANTS

TIP

When you schedule a mammogram or MRI, let the staff know you have breast implants so they can assign you to a specialist who is trained to read images of women with breast implants.



#8 You may develop an implant-related condition

Breast implants are not a lifetime device, and breast implantation is not necessarily a one-time surgery.

Potential implant-related conditions

- › **CAPSULAR CONTRACTURE:** A capsule is connective tissue that normally forms around any device as a reaction to its presence in your body. Capsular contracture occurs when the normal capsule tightens up and squeezes the implant. This can make the implant feel firmer, distort the appearance of the breast, and can be painful
- › **BREAST IMPLANT ASSOCIATED ANAPLASTIC LARGE CELL LYMPHOMA (BIA-ALCL):** Individuals with breast implants have a risk of developing breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma (BIA-ALCL). BIA-ALCL is not breast cancer—it is a type of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma (cancer of the immune system).¹ In most cases, BIA-ALCL is found in the scar tissue and fluid near the implant, but in some cases, it can spread throughout the body. In the cases that have been spread beyond the scar tissue and fluid near the implant, rare cases of death have been reported

Most patients were diagnosed with BIA-ALCL when they sought medical treatment for implant-related symptoms such as swelling, pain, lumps, or asymmetry that developed after their initial surgical sites were fully healed. In the cases known to the FDA to date, BIA-ALCL was diagnosed years after the breast implant was placed and most often diagnosed in women who had textured implants in their implant history

These and other breast implant-related complications may arise after your surgery. Talk to your surgeon if you experience any changes to the look or feel of your breasts. Some of these changes may include pain, swelling, lumps in your breast or armpit, tingling, hardening, or changes in sensation.

¹Current literature reports various BIA-ALCL risk estimates. Estimates range from 1 in 3817 to 1 in 30,000 women with textured implants will develop BIA-ALCL. (Clemens et al, 2017; Loch-Wilkinson et al, 2017; De Boer et al, 2018.)

If you have breast implants, there is no need to change your routine medical care and follow-up. If you notice changes in the way your breasts look and feel after you recover from surgery—including swelling or pain around your breast implants—be sure to talk to your health care provider about the possibility of BIA-ALCL

For additional information on FDA’s analysis and review of BIA-ALCL, please visit: <http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/ImplantsandProsthetics/BreastImplants/ucm239995.htm>

- › **IMPLANT RUPTURE:** Implants are not lifetime devices. A rupture can occur when the shell of the implant develops a tear or hole. The longer the implants are in place, the higher the chance of rupture. Most gel ruptures occur without symptoms and are best detected by MRI
- › **SEROMA:** A seroma is a collection of fluid that occurs in the body after a surgical procedure or trauma. It can occur early after surgery or many years later. It presents as swelling in the breast, bruising, can be painful, and may be accompanied by fever. If this occurs contact your surgeon for evaluation

FYI

Early diagnosis and treatment are key to a good outcome.

#9 Your implants may be covered

Most breast implants come with a manufacturer warranty. Coverage varies across manufacturers, and many include free and automatic enrollment. Check with your plastic surgeon to find out what kind of coverage you have.



#10 Your implants will not last forever

Breast implants are not lifetime devices, and breast implantation is not a one-time surgery.

The longer you have your implants, the more likely you will need them removed or replaced.

Breasts change with time, pregnancy, weight gain or loss, and hormonal changes. Your plastic surgeon is your best resource for recommending procedures that fit your lifestyle and aesthetic goals.



Be your own breast advocate

Is it time to check in with your breasts?

LAST FOLLOW-UP VISIT: _____

LAST FOLLOW-UP VISIT: _____



Routinely examine your breasts so you know if there are changes.



See your plastic surgeon regularly for exams and sooner if you notice any changes.



Follow the American Cancer Society's guidelines for mammograms.



If you move, contact your plastic surgeon's office with your new address and ask for recommendations for a board-certified plastic surgeon in your new location.



Don't take no for an answer. If you have a concern that you feel has not been appropriately addressed, get a second opinion.

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