

Breast Augmentation

Many women choose to have their breasts enlarged in order to satisfy their own desire for a fuller bustline. Your breasts may not have developed to a size that meets your expectations, or one breast may be significantly smaller than the other. You may have been happy with your breasts in the past but feel that they look different now. Often, after weight loss, childbirth or as a result of aging, the breasts lose volume and their shape changes. Breast augmentation can enhance your breast size and shape, and give you the more proportional figure that you always wanted.

Am I a good candidate for breast augmentation?

One or more of the following feelings or conditions may indicate that you are a good candidate for breast augmentation:

- you are bothered by the feeling that your breasts are too small
- clothes that fit well around your hips are often too large at the bustline
- you feel self-conscious wearing a swimsuit or form-fitting top
- your breasts have become smaller and lost their firmness after having children
- weight loss has changed the size and shape of your breasts
- one of your breasts is noticeably smaller than the other

Your Personal Consultation

During the consultation, Dr. Karp or Dr. Choi will ask you about your desired breast size and anything else related to the appearance of your breasts that you feel is important.

This will help him/her understand your expectations and determine whether they realistically can be achieved.

How will Dr. Karp or Dr. Choi evaluate me for breast augmentation surgery?

Dr. Karp or Dr. Choi will examine your breasts and perhaps take photographs for your medical record. He/she will consider such factors as the size and shape of your breasts, the quality of your skin and the placement of your nipples and areolas (the pigmented skin surrounding the nipples). If your breasts are sagging, a breast lift may be recommended in conjunction with augmentation.

You should come to the consultation prepared to discuss your medical history. This will include information about any medical conditions, drug allergies, medical treatments you have received, previous surgeries including breast biopsies, and medications that you currently take. You will be asked whether you have a family

history of breast cancer and about results of any mammograms. It is important for you to provide complete information.

There is no scientific evidence that breast augmentation increases the risk of breast cancer. The presence of breast implants, however, makes it more technically difficult to take and read mammograms. This may be a special consideration for women who perhaps are at higher risk for breast cancer because of their family history or other reasons. Placement of the implant underneath the pectoral muscle may interfere less with mammographic examination, but other factors may also need to be considered with regard to implant placement. Your plastic surgeon will discuss this with you.

If you are planning to lose a significant amount of weight, be sure to tell Dr. Karp or Dr. Choi. He/she may recommend that you stabilize your weight prior to undergoing surgery.

If you think that you may want to become pregnant in the future, you should mention this to your surgeon. Pregnancy can alter breast size in an unpredictable way and could affect the long-term results of your breast augmentation. There is no evidence that breast implants will affect pregnancy or your ability to breast-feed, but if you have questions about these matters, you should ask Dr. Karp or Dr. Choi.

Your Surgical Experience

The goal of Dr. Karp and Dr. Choi and their entire staff is to make your surgical experience as easy and comfortable for you as possible.

How should I prepare for surgery?

In some instances, Dr. Karp and Dr. Choi may recommend a baseline mammogram before surgery and another mammographic examination some months after surgery. This will help to detect any future changes in your breast tissue. Following breast augmentation, you will still be able to perform breast self-examination.

If you are a smoker, you will be asked to stop smoking well in advance of surgery. Aspirin and certain anti-inflammatory drugs can cause increased bleeding, so you should avoid taking these medications for a period of time before surgery. Your surgeon will provide you with additional preoperative instructions.

Breast augmentation is usually performed on an outpatient basis. If this is the case, be sure to arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery and to stay with you at least the first night following surgery.

What will the day of surgery be like?

Your breast augmentation surgery may be performed in a hospital, free-standing ambulatory facility or office-based surgical suite.

Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedure. Frequently, local anesthesia and intravenous sedation are used for patients undergoing breast augmentation, although general anesthesia may be desirable in some instances.

When surgery is completed, you will be taken into a recovery area where you will continue to be closely monitored. Your breasts covered with light dressings and a surgical bra.

You may be permitted to go home after a few hours, unless you and your plastic surgeon have determined that you will stay in the hospital or surgical facility overnight.

How will I look and feel initially?

A day or two after surgery, you should be up and about. Any dressings will be removed within several days, and you may be instructed to wear a support bra. Dr. Karp or Dr. Choi will probably permit you to shower between two to three days following surgery. If there are any stitches, they will be removed in about a week.

Some discoloration and swelling will occur initially, but this will disappear quickly. Most residual swelling will resolve within a month.

When can I resume my normal activities?

After breast augmentation surgery, it is often possible to return to work within just a few days or a week, depending on your job. Vigorous activities, especially arm movement, may be restricted for two to three weeks.

Sexual activity should be avoided for at least the first week following surgery. After that, care must be taken to be extremely gentle with your breasts for at least the next month.

How Breast Augmentation is Performed

Individual factors and personal preferences will help Dr. Karp and Dr. Choi to determine your appropriate breast size, the location of incisions, and whether the implants will be placed on top of or underneath the chest muscle.

What type of implants will be used?

In 1992, because further studies were needed to establish the safety of breast implants, the Food and Drug Administration decided that silicone gel-filled implants would not be generally available for cosmetic breast enlargement. Currently, all women undergoing breast augmentation receive saline-filled implants which consist of a silicone shell filled with sterile saltwater. If you have significant breast sagging or absence of one breast, you may be a candidate for silicone breast implants

New scientific data on the safety of breast implants is rapidly being collected. In the future, it is possible that additional types of filler materials may become available. Dr. Karp and Dr. Choi will be able to provide you with the latest information.

Where are the incisions placed?

One of the advantages of a saline-filled implant is that, because it is filled with saltwater after being inserted, only a small incision is needed. Often, an incision of less than one inch is made underneath the breast, just above the crease, where it is usually quite inconspicuous.

Another possible location for the incision is around the lower edge of the areola. A third alternative is to make a small incision within the armpit.

Once the incision is made, the surgeon creates a pocket into which the implant will be inserted. This pocket is made either directly behind the breast tissue or underneath the pectoral muscle which is located between the breast tissue and chest wall.

Understanding Risks

Every year, many thousands of women undergo successful breast augmentation surgery; however, anyone considering surgery should be aware of both the benefits and risks.

I understand that every surgical procedure has risks, but how will I learn more so that I can make an informed decision?

The subject of risks and potential complications of surgery is best discussed on a personal basis between you and Dr. Karp or Dr. Choi, or with a staff member in his/her office.

Some of the potential complications that may be discussed with you include reactions to anesthesia, blood accumulation that may need to be drained surgically and infection. Although rare, an infection that does not subside with appropriate treatment may require temporary removal of the implant. Changes in nipple or breast sensation may result from breast augmentation surgery, although they usually are temporary.

When a breast implant is inserted, a scar capsule forms around it as part of the natural healing process. The capsule may sometimes tighten and compress the implant, causing the breast to feel firmer than normal. Capsular contracture can occur to varying degrees. If it is severe, it can cause discomfort or changes in the breast's appearance. In such cases, more surgery may be needed to modify or remove the scar tissue, or perhaps remove or replace the implant.

Breast implants are not lifetime devices and cannot be expected to last forever. If a saline-filled implant breaks, its contents are harmlessly absorbed by the body within hours. A definite change in the size of the breast is clearly noticed. Rupture can occur as a result of trauma to the chest, but more commonly it occurs spontaneously with no apparent cause. Surgery will be required to replace the implant, if desired.

If you are at an age when mammographic examinations should be conducted on a periodic basis, it will be important for you to select a radiology technician who is

experienced in taking x-rays of augmented breasts. Additional views of your breasts will be required. Your plastic surgeon, in some instances, may recommend other types of examinations such as ultrasound or magnetic resonance imaging. It is possible that the presence of breast implants could delay or hinder the early detection of breast cancer.

Some women with breast implants have reported problems including certain connective tissue and immune-related diseases. Women without implants also have these disorders, so the key question is whether breast implants increase the risk of developing the conditions. Several large studies have been completed that provide reassurance that women with breast implants do not have a significantly increased risk for these diseases.

Results of Breast Augmentation

Breast augmentation will make your breasts fuller and enhance their shape. You will find it easier to wear certain styles of clothing. Like many women who have had breast augmentation, you may have a boost in self-confidence.

How long will the results last?

Except in the event of implant deflation requiring surgical replacement with a new implant, the results of your breast augmentation surgery will be long-lasting. However, gravity and the effects of aging will eventually alter the size and shape of virtually every woman's breasts. If, after a period of years, you become dissatisfied with the appearance of your breasts, you may choose to undergo a breast "lifting" to restore their more youthful contour.

Maintaining a Relationship with Your Plastic Surgeon

You will return to Dr. Karp's or Dr. Choi's office for follow-up care at prescribed intervals, at which time your progress will be evaluated. Your surgeon will encourage you to schedule routine mammographic evaluations at the frequency recommended for your age group.

Please remember that the relationship with Dr. Karp and Dr. Choi does not end when you leave the operating room. If you have questions or concerns during your recovery, or need additional information at a later time, you should contact your surgeon.