

BLOG

The Ultimate Guide to Breast Implant Options

From the different types to the benefits and

By Tatiana Bido, Aesthetic Content Manager · Published: Apr 28, 2023



Picking the right breast implant option is more than just choosing between silicone and saline implants. Breast implants come in different sizes, shapes, and textures and can be customized to meet your individual aesthetic goals. It is essential to work with a board-certified plastic surgeon to select the implants that will complement your lifestyle and body type to achieve the best result. Choosing the right implant is critical for getting a natural-looking result that will enhance your overall look. Here, top plastic surgeons help navigate through the implant options available today.

Silicone vs. Saline

“Saline Implants consist of a silicone outer shell filled with sterile saltwater, or saline, solution,” says Glen Carbon, IL plastic surgeon Ryan Diederich, MD. “These implants can be filled to different sizes depending on the desired outcome, and the saline solution is absorbed harmlessly by the body if the implant ruptures.”

Silicone implants are made of a silicone outer shell filled with silicone gel inside says,” New York plastic surgeon **Elie Levine, MD**. “Silicone generally feels more natural and soft. Small saline implants can feel natural and soft, but when you start getting to moderate and large sizes, it begins to feel a little less natural.” The gel is less likely to ripple than saline implants. However, if they rupture, silicone gel can leak into the surrounding area and may require surgical removal.

There are several brands of breast implants sold in the United States that have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Some of the most common brand names of breast implants sold in the United States include: Allergan Natrelle, Mentor MemoryGel, Sientra Opus, Ideal Implant and Motiva Ergonomix.



Gummy Bear Implants

Dr. Levine shares that the Gummy Bear implant is a silicone implant, but the gel inside is more cohesive. “There are different levels of silicone in terms of how firm they are and how cohesive they are. The difference is that if you were to take a traditional silicone implant and cut it, it would be kind of gooey inside and if you were to cut a Gummy Bear implant, it would be formed stable.”



Risks Associated with Implants

The common risks associated with breast implants include infection, pain, scarring, and changes in nipple sensation. There is also a risk of capsular contracture, implant rupture or leakage, which may require additional surgery. “Capsular contracture occurs when the scar tissue around the implant hardens and contracts, potentially causing discomfort or distortion of the breast shape,” says Dr. Diederich. “Implant rupture or leakage can also occur and cause changes in breast size, shape or texture. In the case of a silicone implant, the leaked gel will need to be removed.”



“Additionally, textured implants have been associated with a rare type of cancer called Breast Implant-Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL),” says Tucson, AZ plastic surgeon Raman Mahabir, MD. This is why today’s implant options are all smooth, round implants, explains the surgeon. “Very few people are using them anymore because of the risks.”

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How to Choose the Right Implant

Choosing the right implant size and shape is a personalized process that factors in body type, desired size, and the guidance of your surgeon. “The most important thing is to get your breasts measured properly,” says Dr. Mahabir. “Your plastic surgeon will take the full measurements of your chest and breasts to get what’s called the footprint or the base diameter of your breasts. Everyone is different, so you have to respect the width of your chest or if you go bigger, you’re going to get a bunch of sideboob.”

Dr. Diederich says 3D imaging technology may also be used to simulate what different sizes and shapes of implants would look like on your body. “Together with your surgeon you can discuss the benefits and drawbacks of different options to help you choose the right size and style of implant for your body,” he says.



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Implant Alternatives

For those who don’t want an implant but desire a volume boost, an alternative to breast implants is fat transfer. “This involves taking fat from one part of the body, such as the thighs or abdomen, and injecting it into the breasts to increase their size,” adds Dr. Diederich. It’s less invasive than traditional breast augmentation surgery and can provide a more natural-looking result. “However, the amount of fat that can be transferred is limited, so the increase in breast size may be subtle and take multiple procedures to obtain,” he explains. “Further the procedure is limited by your natural body habitus.”



Cost + Recovery

The cost of breast implants can vary widely depending on several factors, such as the geographic location of the surgery, the surgeon's level of experience, and the type of implant used. According to 2021 statistics from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the average cost of breast augmentation surgery—including the cost of implants—in the U.S. was \$4,893. However, this figure does factor in other expenses such as anesthesia, facility fees, and follow-up appointments, which can add to the total cost.

Breast implant recovery can vary depending on several factors, including the type of implant surgery, the patient's overall health, and the size and placement of the implants. "In general, patients can expect to experience some discomfort, swelling, and bruising for a few weeks after surgery," says **Dr. Levine**. "They may also need to limit certain activities, such as exercise and lifting heavy objects, for a week to ensure proper healing."



Registering Your Implants

It is important for patients with implants to register them with the manufacturer and other regulatory agencies. "By doing so, you can be notified of any safety concerns or product recalls related to their implants," says **Dr. Levine**. Additionally, keeping track of important information such as the implant type, size, and placement can help healthcare providers provide better care in case of complications or future surgeries. The Aesthetic One app is a useful tool for tracking implants because it allows patients to easily access and update their implant information, keep track of appointments and post-operative instructions, and receive notifications about any relevant safety information.

