



KATARZYNA MACKENZIE
PLASTIC SURGEON

Breast Implant Removal/Secondary Breast Implant Surgery

Secondary breast implant surgery is an umbrella term that covers several different procedures that might be undertaken when breast implants have been in place for some time and/or need to be changed.

When you are considering breast implant removal, you should first see a specialist plastic surgeon about the reasons you want the implants removed and share your expectations. This way, your surgeon can provide recommendations based on your desired result – for example removing your implants and performing a breast lift (mastopexy), breast augmentation using fat transfer or replacing the implants with smaller or shaped ones, or simply repositioning and replacing your implants.

Length of surgery	1-4 hours
Anaesthesia	General anaesthetic
Hospital stay	Day case or 1 night
Risks/complications of surgery	Frequent: Bruising, swelling, temporary numbness Infrequent: Infection, bleeding (haematoma), delayed wound healing, nipple necrosis, asymmetry, poor scarring, capsular contracture, rippling, implant rupture
Recovery	5-10 days until socialising with close friends and family 2-3 weeks until return to work and normal social engagements 4-6 weeks until swelling and bruising disappears 6 weeks sports bra day and night. Wired bra after 2 months 4-6 weeks until return to gym and other strenuous activities 3-6 months until final result
Driving	1-2 weeks
Sleeping position	Sleep on your back
Follow up	1 week, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months
Duration of results	Long-lasting unless pregnancy and weight gain/loss

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Breast implant removal information sheet

Any plastic surgery procedure is a very personal choice and understandably there are several questions that arise. This information sheet is a general guide for patients considering breast implant removal under the care of Dr Mackenzie. It should provide the answers to some questions that you may have. There are many factors that can affect your individual operation, your recovery, and the long-term result. Some of these factors include your overall health, previous breast surgery, chest size and body shape, any bleeding tendencies that you have and your healing capabilities, some of which will be affected by smoking, alcohol, and various medications. Such issues that are specific to you need to be discussed with Dr Mackenzie and are not covered here. Please feel free to ask her any further questions before you sign the consent form.

Introduction

As we age, our skin's collagen production slows, making our skin more prone to sagging. Breasts with implants are more prone to sagging caused by the weight of the implant and from the natural effects of aging. Sometimes as women get older, they reevaluate their current implant size and elect to receive a smaller implant during their revisional surgery.

On average, today's implants are designed to last more than a decade, with the chance of rupture increasing by one percent each year. So, the older your implants are, the greater your risk of rupture or other complications.

Breast implant removal/secondary breast implant surgery is very individualised or bespoke surgery. The complexity of the surgery will depend on the condition of your implants, your breasts and the end result that you would like to achieve. It is not always possible to achieve the same results or to achieve them as easily as done in your first implant surgery.

What surgery can be done?

This will depend on why you are having the surgery, how your breast tissue is after having implants in place and what end result you would like. The surgeries include one or a combination of implant exchange, capsulectomy (removal of the scar capsule around an implant), implant removal, mastopexy, lipofilling (fat transfer), adjustment of the implant position and adjustment of breast shape.

What are the reasons for a patient to undergo breast implant removal?

The most common reasons women undergo breast implant removal are:

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- Change of breast shape since breast augmentation (due to pregnancy, breastfeeding, age, weight changes)
- Implant rupture
- Capsular contracture (scar tissue that hardens around the implants. It can cause pain, discomfort, misshapen breast)
- Breast implant associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma/SCC (a rare cancer that occurs in scar tissue around an implant)
- Implant rippling/folding
- Breast implant illness
- Pain related to implants
- Shifting or movement of one or both implants
- Personal choice: Sometimes people don't want to have their implants anymore, or have different cosmetic goals and want to change their implant size
- Infection

Who is a good candidate for breast implant removal surgery?

Breast implant removal surgery is a highly individualized procedure. The following are other common reasons why you may want to consider breast augmentation:

- Your breasts are too heavy
- You feel bothered about the appearance of the implants
- You feel that your breast size is not proportional to your figure
- You lost volume after pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Your breasts are painful and feel tight
- You are a non-smoker

What are the complications of secondary breast implant surgery?

In general, secondary breast implant removal surgery is safe with an associated high degree of patient satisfaction. Nevertheless, no surgery is without risk.

All general anaesthetics carry risks such as deep vein thrombosis and chest infection but with modern anaesthetic techniques, these are minimised.

Some of the complications that can happen include slow healing, infection, bleeding, poor scarring, asymmetry, pain, numbness or sensitivity in the skin, contour irregularities, seroma, loss of nipple sensation, loss of nipple or breast tissue, implant rupture, implant malposition, capsular contracture and BIA-ALCL (a rare lymphoma associated with some breast implant types).