

[Breast augmentation](#) has come a long way since the first one back in 1962, but there's still a lot of mystery for some people who are considering boosting their assets. It's time to do your research.

How Big is Too Big?

At first, it's tempting to go big. But your surgeon has to consider the size, volume and shape of your bust, as well as your muscle size and tone. Your new bust needs to be in proportion to your waist and your hips. (120ccs is modest and 450cc is considered large). Age plays a factor too: you need good [skin elasticity](#) to accommodate larger implants otherwise you will be left covered with stretch marks.

Will Implants Look Obvious On a Small-Busted Woman?

If you're small-busted, avoid the temptation to go big. You will simply not have enough breast tissue to cover the edge of the implant and it will show through. So trust your surgeon to choose a [smaller implant](#) with a more rounded shape to give the illusion of volume. (Learn more in [How to Choose the Best Breast Implant Size and Shape for Your Body Type](#).)

Implants Aren't Just for Christmas

Rest assured that despite numerous independent studies, there is no link between breast implants and cancer or autoimmune disease. Although silicone implants dating back to the '60s did have safety issues, their quality has been well regulated since 1991. Though implants can theoretically last a lifetime, they might need to be replaced at some point due to wear and tear from weight loss, weight gain, age and childbirth. So make sure your implants have a lifetime guarantee.

Although silicone implants are now much thicker and stronger, it might be wise to get them checked every few years to make sure that they haven't ruptured. You might not even realize because they don't deflate like saline implants; instead, scar tissue holds the silicone gel in place.

Saline Vs. Silicone

When earlier models of silicone implants experienced complications, saline implants seemed like a safer alternative. But they have a tendency to wrinkle because their silicone bag is not filled completely full with saline. These wrinkles can be visible through the skin of a slender woman and can also weaken the bag, leaving it vulnerable to rupture. When saline implants deflate, they deflate very quickly — hardly discreet! (There aren't any safety concerns however because they are filled with salt water which is excreted naturally.)

Silicone gel feels softer and moves more naturally than saline because the texture is similar to body fat. However, silicone clouds x-ray results, so mammograms would need to be taken from a different angle.

Saline is still a good option if you don't want a scar. The empty implants are inserted through the belly button and filled with saline afterwards. However, bear in mind that this procedure has more complications.

Should I Have My Implants Placed In Front of My Chest Muscle?

Your surgeon will place the implants in front of your chest muscle if your breasts have become saggy and empty following childbirth or weight loss. Although recovery time is quicker and less painful, there are some disadvantages. There is slightly more risk of encapsulation and 'bottoming out', which is when the implant drops below the bottom fold of the breast because of weakness in the breast tissue. This more rounded look is more obvious, more prone to rippling and is easier to feel.

What If My Implants Are Placed Behind the Chest Muscle?

Your surgeon will place the implants behind the chest muscle if you have small breasts with little excess skin to cover them. The recovery time is longer, more uncomfortable and the breasts take longer to settle; it's especially harder to place large implants behind the muscle. On the plus side, there's less risk of encapsulation because the muscle acts as padding, protecting the implant from pressure and also reduces the risk of bottoming out. This padding also prevents the implant from being felt. These implants look more natural because they are less rounded at the top, but keep in mind that when you flex your muscles in the gym it reveals the outline of the implant!

Saggy Nipples!

Childbirth and breastfeeding can lead to empty breasts with saggy nipples. Augmentation can help lift a saggy nipple, but if it is sitting very low then a [mastopexy](#) is necessary which is a more complex procedure with considerable scarring. (Learn all about correcting saggy nipples with [A Comprehensive Guide to Nipple Reduction Surgery](#).)

Get Measured!

Look after your new breasts because over time they will sag just like natural breasts. They will change shape before your period or after weight gain. Most women are wearing the wrong size bra, so once your implants have settled, get a professional bra fitting. (The right size has the added benefit of making you look slimmer because it lifts saggy boobs off the chest wall). Bear in mind that your new breasts will be heavier so will need a supportive bra. Avoid thin straps which can dig into the nerves from the arm down to the little finger and cause numbness.