

Breast implants: does the lifting effect stand the test of time?

Glamour bust and stunning cleavage, two intrinsic qualities of artificial breasts.

But how can their resistance and longevity be tested? How can a fissure, a rupture be detected? Answers from an expert.

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"Breast implants used in aesthetic or reconstructive surgery are safe but their lifespan is limited (from ten to twenty years), not because of hidden defects but because of wear over time". This is the immediate statement of the IT Marc-David Benjoar, plastic surgeon at Henri-Mondor Hospital, an expert on the Breast Implant Committee for public assistance. Other parameters (manufacturing quality, mastery of the intervention, patient's lifestyle) likewise intervene in this longevity. Suffice to say that the laboratories guaranteeing the implants for life are making false promises. It would be more accurate to speak of several replacements in one lifetime.

TRACKING, PRICE... RELIABLE SAFETY CRITERIA

How does one know if an implant has all the safety guarantees? This question is even more evident since the suspension, by the French Health Products Safety Agency (Agence française de sécurité sanitaire des produits de santé (AFSSAPS)), of implant marketing for the company Poly Implant Prosthesis (PIP) in March 2010. A rise in the number of premature ruptures of these implants had revealed that a filling gel had been used, which was different from that in the initial declaration. "First of all", Dr Benjoar states, "you have to trust the surgeon, who knows which laboratories produce consistent and impeccable quality. As for the patients, they should ask the brand of the implant during the consultation. After the intervention, an identity card, with tracking details from design to implantation, must be given to them". The price, which must appear on the quotation provided before every operation, is also a good criterion in eliminating dubious brands. A silicone gel pair is invoiced at around 500 euros and may even reach 900 to 1,200 euros if anatomical prostheses are involved with a sheath covered in polyurethane foam, preventing any risk of rotation. Thus, exercise caution with anything below 450 euros. Implants filled with physiological serum are an exception, the pair costs around 300 euros.

A FISSURE, A RUPTURE, HOW ARE THEY DETECTED?

Despite all the precautions in their preparation and all the inspections by the AFSSAPS, a minimal percentage of implants may exhibit defects: fissure, rupture, leakage. According to the statistics of the French Sebbin Laboratories, specialised in their manufacture, the risk of rupture within the first eight years after being fitted, would be clearly below 10%. And in the event of problems, if the implicated laboratory is European, it will be easier to request a rectification in France or in Germany than on Mauritius Island or in Brazil! But what symptoms reveal that there is a fissure or rupture? Everything depends on the filling product. If this is physiological serum, a stark change in breast volume is a good indication that the implant sheath is in the process of emptying out. But if the implant is prefilled with cohesive silicone gel, the rupture may go unnoticed as, owing to its viscosity, the gel will not spread out. It is thus important, in order to be assured of the perfect integrity of the sheath, to undergo regular clinical examinations.

**ONE PAIR OF SILICONE GEL IMPLANTS
COSTS AROUND € 500, EXERCISE
CAUTION WITH ANYTHING BELOW €
450!**