

25 July 2019

### **A statement on breast implant illness**

Breast implant illness is a term used by women who have breast implants and who describe symptoms of illness. These symptoms may include tiredness, chest pain, difficulty sleeping and depression. Women feel these symptoms are related to their breast implants.

A large number of studies have been carried out on the safety of silicone breast implants. To date, silicone has not been proven to cause any disease. Research into the safety of silicone breast implants has found no clear link between the implants and illness. Many of the symptoms described by women who have had implants are also experienced by the general public who do not have implants.

An article published in the journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons in July 2019<sup>1</sup> states there is presently ‘overwhelming evidence to support the safety of silicone breast implants.... To the best of our body of scientific knowledge to date, there have not been any concrete or evidence-based studies or peer-reviewed data concerning the formation of a new syndrome: “silicone implant illness”.’

There is currently no way to test for breast implant illness – which means whether it exists cannot be proved or disproved. There is therefore no known ‘risk’ for breast implant illness.

It is important that women with concerns about potential breast implant illness discuss these with their plastic surgeon to decide together about the best thing to do. Options might include doing nothing, monitoring the situation, or removing the implants. However, removal of implants may not mean the symptoms go away, as they may not have been linked to the implant. Ultimately, it is the woman’s decision whether to keep or remove breast implants.

### ***Risks associated with breast implants***

There are some risks associated with breast implants, including breast implant associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma (BIA-ALCL). This is a rare form of lymphatic cancer that can develop near breast implants. Please see our separate statement on this condition.

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<sup>1</sup> Rohrich, Rod J. M.D.; Kaplan, Jordan M.D.; Dayan, Erez M.D. Silicone Implant Illness: Science versus Myth? *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*. [July 2019 - Volume 144 - Issue 1 - p 98-109](#), doi: 10.1097/PRS.0000000000005710