

Psychosocial Aspects of Breast Implant Removal

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon Dr. Constance M. Chen on 4 things to know before implant removal

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, October 13, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There are approximately 400,000 breast implant surgeries performed every year in the United States. 75% of [breast implants](#) are placed for cosmetic reasons, and 25% of breast implants are placed for breast reconstruction after mastectomy. Despite this, over 70,000 explantation surgeries for [breast implant removal](#) were performed in 2021. There are a myriad of reasons why patients with breast implants choose to have their implants removed. "The psychosocial aspects of implant removal aren't always talked about enough. They're definitely manageable, but being prepared to deal with them in advance can make it a lot easier," says Dr. [Constance M. Chen](#). According to Dr. Chen, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon who specializes in breast and body restoration, it is important that patients be educated about breast implants so they can make the best decisions for their own bodies.



Dr. Constance Chen

Why might someone want to have their implants removed? The reasons are usually personal and as varied as the patients themselves, but broadly the reasons for implant removal fall into a few general categories:

- Capsular contracture.

"This is the most common problem after implantation surgery. For many people with breast implants, the body makes too much internal scar tissue which can then harden and contract over time. If the implant becomes too uncomfortable or painful, or it causes breast deformation, some people will choose to remove their breast implants," explains Dr. Chen.

- Medical or health reasons.

Sometimes implants can rupture or leak. Or they can become infected after a colonoscopy or dental procedure. Or breast implants placed underneath the pectoralis muscle may cause numbness, tingling, and pain in the back, neck, or shoulders. Although it is rare, breast implants



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can even cause a cancer of the immune system that develops in the scar tissue around the breast implant. These are all possible reasons for implant removal.

- Bodily changes.

“Life happens to everyone. This can take the form of pregnancy or breastfeeding, or even just the natural aging process. Our bodies are not static, and as they change, some people may decide to have their implants removed,” says Dr. Chen.

- Preference changes.

Cosmetic goals can change over time. “Some people might want to change the size of their implants—either large or smaller. Or some may decide they don’t want implants at all anymore because implants no longer fit with their self-image,” says Dr. Chen.

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“Patients can ask their doctor about the effects of implant removal, and request to speak with other patients who have already gone through the process. It is important to ask questions. Surgeons should be invested in their patients’ emotional and physical well-being,” Dr. Chen advises.

So for those considering implant removal, what psychosocial changes should be expected?

1. Body image.

After implant removal, the breasts can appear deflated, deformed, and droopy. Although the breast skin shrinks and the breast tissue re-expands over the subsequent weeks and months, it can be a shock to see the changed appearance immediately after surgery. Furthermore, for patients who have had breast implants for a long time, they may have become accustomed to seeing themselves with large breasts. It can be jarring to see themselves with much smaller breasts - even after the shape has become more normal.

2. Sexuality.

The immediate effects of implant removal on sexuality may be linked to the appearance of the breasts after surgery. With implant removal alone, the breasts may appear deflated and/or deformed - at least temporarily. In addition, all breast surgeries come with some risk of a change in sensation. Many people have no change in sensation after implant removal, but some can have either greater or less sensitivity, or might experience discomfort or itchiness.

3. Mood changes.

Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of patients who undergo implant removal feel relief - as if the burden of breast implants has literally been lifted from their chests. Usually, these patients have experienced significant pain, discomfort, fatigue, joint aches, hair and skin changes and other autoimmune type problems prior to surgery. When they emerge from anesthesia, many patients report feeling lighter and immediate relief from ongoing chronic symptoms.

4. Social perception.

Some patients may feel self-conscious about implant removal because they may wonder what other people think. At times, they may even receive uninvited opinions. People who have had implants already have some experience with this. It's important to keep in mind that implant removal is first and foremost about feeling comfortable in one's own body.

"Just being aware of these potential effects in advance can go a long way toward preparing yourself mentally for how you feel after surgery," says Dr. Chen. "Work with your surgeon to make a plan. Know how much to exercise, get outdoors, and share what you're feeling with trusted family and friends. And if something doesn't feel right, say something."

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