

Breast Augmentation Safe for Active Women

ASPS Study Shows No Long-Term Effect on Muscle or Nerve Function

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ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. – Breast augmentation performed under the pectoral muscle causes no loss of muscle function or loss of nipple sensation long term, according to the February issue of *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*®, the official medical journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). This is good news for active and athletic women who want larger breasts but may hesitate to have breast augmentation due to concerns that the surgery may injure muscle or nerve function and interfere with their active lifestyle.

“Many patients who are extremely active, from playing tennis to weight lifting, want assurance that they will have normal muscle function after breast augmentation,” said **Jillian Banbury, MD**, co-author of the study and ASPS member. “My patients’ satisfaction, as well as knowing first-hand the safety and effectiveness of the procedures I perform, is of utmost importance to me. So I decided to conduct my own study to share with my patients.”

The study assessed 47 patients for pectoralis muscle function, breast sensation and body image before and after subpectoral breast augmentation. The strength and movement of the pectoral muscle, which is the large muscle on the chest that flexes and rotates the shoulder, did not significantly change during the study period. There was no change in muscle flexion (bending), extension or raising the arms when preoperative muscle function was compared with the three-month and six-month evaluation periods. In addition, there was no significant difference in muscle function regardless of implant size.

In assessing sensory changes of the breast, both pressure and vibratory testing were performed. Results from the study indicated a significant change in breast sensation at three months postoperatively but the sensation returned by six months, indicating that the change was temporary while the tissue surrounding the breast healed.

The study also examined patients’ body image after surgery. Utilizing the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire, the results showed that body image significantly improved at both postoperative measuring periods.

According to ASPS statistics, more than 236,000 women had breast augmentation in 2002 – an increase of 593 percent since 1992.

“Looking at those numbers, it’s significant that the plastic surgery community can say, without a doubt, that breast augmentation will not disrupt an active woman’s lifestyle,” said Dr. Banbury. “Now, women can knowingly make themselves feel better without having the surgery affect their way of life.”

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons is the largest organization of board-certified plastic surgeons in the world. With more than 6,000 members, the society is recognized as a leading authority and information source on cosmetic and reconstructive plastic surgery. ASPS comprises 94 percent of all board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States. Founded in 1931, the society represents physicians certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

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