

A man and a woman are smiling and embracing each other in a bright, brick-walled room. The woman is wearing a black and white striped shirt, and the man is wearing a white t-shirt. They are looking at each other with affection. The background is a brick wall with arched windows, and the lighting is warm and natural.

IOWA CITY  
**ASC**  
AMBULATORY  
SURGICAL CENTER

**BREAST AUGMENTATION**

**AND RECONSTRUCTION:**

**YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

**OVER 360,000 BREAST AUGMENTATION PROCEDURES WERE PERFORMED IN 2021 ALONE. PATIENTS UNDERGO THIS PROCEDURE IN ORDER TO ENHANCE, ENLARGE, OR ALTER THE SHAPE OF THE BREASTS, AND THEY DO SO FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF REASONS.**

Some patients are looking to regain shape and volume lost during breastfeeding and pregnancy. This could be accomplished with use of implant or fat grafting. Other patients want to improve symmetry.

Breast augmentation can help patients with physical, emotional, and psychological goals. In general, the procedure can improve confidence and self-esteem. The precise shape of your breast augmentation results will be tailored to your unique goals.

As a result, patients may have many options to navigate—and many questions they'd like answered.





THERE ARE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS TO EACH APPROACH AND IMPLANT CHOICE. WHICH ONE IS “BEST” DEPENDS ON YOUR GOALS AND WHAT YOUR DOCTOR ADVISES.

## Breast Augmentation: Implant Options

Breast implants are a highly regulated medical device, and they are used in the vast majority of breast augmentation procedures. There are several different types of implant materials, surfaces, and shapes available. During your consultation with your plastic surgeon, you'll discuss the best possible options to help you achieve your desired goals.

Two broad categories of breast implant types are used for most cosmetic procedures:

**Saline implants:** Saline implants are composed of what is essentially salt water. They are useful for patients who want to achieve a small or modest increase in overall breast size or who have a preference for non-silicone implants.

**Silicone implants:** Modern silicone implants have several advantages: they're durable, incredibly safe, and they look and feel very natural. There's also no evidence that silicone implants are detrimental to your health. Dr. Chesnokova has established contracts with Allergan, Sientra and Mentor implants due to their durability and favorable appearance.

## Other Implant Choices to Make

As you consider your breast augmentation procedure, you will talk about the following with your plastic surgeon:

**Surface type:** Most modern breast implants have a smooth surface. Textured implants have generally been removed from the market due to an increase in certain complications.

**Placement:** Your breast implant most of the time will be placed beneath the chest muscles in order to achieve the most natural appearance possible. It can also be placed above the muscle depending on the patient and the situation. Your surgeon will discuss more precise implant placement information before your procedure.

**Incision type:** Breast augmentation can be performed using several different incision types. Each has their own benefits and drawbacks. For example, some incisions are less visible but cannot accommodate larger implants. You and your surgeon will discuss which is best for your goals and for your body.



## What Happens During a Breast Augmentation?

In most cases, breast augmentation is an outpatient procedure, meaning that no overnight stay will likely be needed. Typically the surgery will take about an hour to complete and patients are given general anesthesia.

During the procedure, your surgeon will make an incision, place your chosen implant, and then suture the incision. You'll be moved to a recovery room for a few hours before being allowed to return home for the duration of your recuperation.

## Who is a Good Candidate for Breast Augmentation?

In general, candidates for breast augmentation may:

Want to increase the volume of their breasts.

Want to correct asymmetry between breast sizes.

Reverse the signs of aging or changes of breast associated with pregnancy or nursing

Patients who are interested in breast augmentation should generally be healthy enough for surgery. It's recommended that patients avoid smoking or using tobacco products around the time of their procedure.

Those interested in breast augmentation should speak to their doctor or care provider.



## Are There Risks Associated with Breast Augmentation?

As with any surgical procedure, there are risks associated with breast augmentation. Some of the most common complications include:

**Infection:** Any surgery carries with it a small chance for infection. Your plastic surgeon will tell you what signs or symptoms to look out for.

**Capsular contracture:** Scar tissue around your breast implant is a normal part of the healing process. However, in some patients, this scar tissue will start to contract, a condition called capsular contracture. This can cause pain, physical discomfort, and aesthetic concerns.

**Rupture of implant:** A rupture of a saline implant will be immediately noticeable, as your breast will essentially “deflate.” However, a silicone implant will hold its shape even when a rupture occurs. Because it can be silent with silicone implant the recommendation is to undergo surveillance imaging several years after implant placement either with MRI or US to evaluate integrity of the implant shape.

Your surgeon will always discuss possible complications that may occur after your procedure. If you have questions about specific complications, be sure to ask about them during your consultation.

## Is Breast Augmentation Permanent?

Your breast augmentation procedure will yield effectively permanent results. But there a couple of important caveats to remember:

If you have a saline or silicone breast implant, that implant can be surgically removed at any time. You can then decide to go back to your original breast size or replace your implant with a different one.

There is no consensus on an appropriate life span of the implant, but some patients will undergo one or two implant replacements in their lifetime. This depends on the age at which time they receive their original breast augmentation.

## Breast Reconstruction—And How It's Different Than Breast Augmentation

Breast reconstruction is performed after a single or double mastectomy. The mastectomy will remove breast tissue as a means of treating or preventing breast cancer. Afterwards, a breast reconstruction can be performed in order to restore the breast mound and restore the shape of the breasts.

Some of the most significant differences between a typical breast augmentation and a breast reconstruction procedure include the following:

**Saline or silicone implants:** Even when saline or silicone implants are used, this procedure is a breast reconstruction surgery—not a breast augmentation. In most cases the mastectomy skin envelope will allow for same time breast reconstruction after the breast tissue has been removed.

**Autologous or “Flap” reconstruction:** During a flap procedure tissue from your own body is used to restore breast shape. Flap procedures have the advantage of reconstructing the breast mound that results in a very naturalistic look and feel. The use of a tissue expander: For patients who opt for a saline or silicone breast implant reconstruction, a tissue expander may first be used to make room for the desired implant. Expanders will slowly create a pocket for the implant to sit in. A patient may need a temporary tissue expander in preparation for Autologous tissue reconstruction.

**A longer recovery:** Autologous “flap” reconstruction is a more complicated procedure and requires longer recovery.

**The timing may be different:** You'll want to talk to your plastic surgery team and your oncology team to determine the timing of your breast reconstruction surgery.

**You will have options for nipple reconstruction:** When patients undergo either an implant or flap reconstruction, they may also opt to add a nipple to the breast. Sometimes this is done via tissue; in other cases patients may opt for a tattooed nipple. Nipple reconstruction is done as a separate procedure at a later time.

**Insurance will cover your procedure:** While every insurance carrier is different, in most cases, your breast reconstruction procedure will be covered by your insurance. That's not true of a cosmetic breast augmentation procedure.



**ON THE SURFACE, BREAST AUGMENTATION AND RECONSTRUCTION HAVE SIMILAR AIMS: INCREASING THE VOLUME OF THE BREASTS. HOWEVER, BREAST RECONSTRUCTION IS A VERY DIFFERENT PROCEDURE.**

For most patients, it will be useful to think of breast reconstruction as a series of procedures, performed in stages, designed to help you restore your body shape and your confidence. Post-mastectomy breast reconstruction is usually coordinated with a patient's oncology and care teams to ensure the best possible outcome.

## Get Answers from a Plastic Surgeon

There's a lot to talk about when it comes to breast augmentation—and a lot of information for surgeons and patients to discuss. During a consultation, Dr. Chesnokova will be able to provide you with individualized answers that will help you be informed and feel confident moving forward.

## Additional Breast Augmentation or Reconstruction Resources

Still have questions about breast augmentation or reconstruction? These resources can help you learn even more about this procedure.

<https://www.theaestheticsociety.org/>

[www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org)

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