



# communication is the key

Sydney cosmetic plastic surgeon **Dr Benjamin Norris** believes that good communication between patient and surgeon is as important as the breast surgery itself. Christine Doggett reports.

With the arrival of summer and the attraction of beach activities and water sports, women start examining their bodies more closely. For many women, augmented breasts and cleavages are high on the list of priorities, according to Sydney cosmetic surgeon Dr Benjamin Norris, but achieving a beautiful bust line is not simply a matter of increasing the size.

Dr Norris knows that women come in different shapes and sizes – tall, lean, petite, curvaceous – so when considering implants, one size definitely does not fit all.

‘While most women want their improved breasts to appear natural as well as beautiful, what constitutes natural and beautiful is very subjective,’ he says. ‘This is why it is crucial for the surgeon to establish a rapport with the patient from the initial consultation.’



A firm believer that a patient will disclose all her concerns about her goal to improve her breasts only when she is at ease, Dr Norris is keenly aware of the subtlety of patient-doctor relationships.

‘The surgeon must first make the patient feel comfortable and then listen carefully,’ he says. ‘It is important to be able to interpret what is being said, and just as vital to understand what is not said.’

There is a wide range in implants from which to choose, according to Dr Norris, and the surgeon is able to use his artistic eye to assist the patient in making the choice that contributes to her natural look.

‘Generally, the patient wants her silhouette to remain in proportion with her body size and shape, and the surgeon guides the patient to the choice of implant which is appropriate for her tissue,’ he explains.

‘So the consultation process is very individualised, with procedures tailored to each woman. Sometimes a patient desires a breast size disproportionately large for her frame. However, a skilled surgeon can, with open communication, guide the patient towards an outcome for her which looks both beautiful and natural.’

When considering the size, shape and type of implants and their placement, there is a wide range of possibilities. For this reason, Dr Norris does not like to rush consultations. Implants are available in a range of size, shape, profile and texture.

The outer lining of the implant is made of thin silicone

and is either smooth or textured, the textured surface helping to reduce the formation of scar tissue. Implants are filled with either saline or silicone gel, with silicone gel considered safer and providing a more natural feel.

At consultations, Dr Norris discusses in detail how the operation is performed and where the scar will be placed. The placement of the implant depends to a degree on the nature of the breast tissue. An incision is required and there are three choices for placement: hidden in the fold under the breast, around the edge of the nipple or in the armpit. The implant is most commonly placed in the chest wall muscle (sub-muscular), giving a more natural appearance and feel, but it can also be inserted immediately behind the breast tissue (sub-glandular) on top of the breast.

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He conducts a range of measurements to assess which implant is suitable to create the look the patient wants, as well as assessing the patient’s skin tone, condition of the breast and fatty tissues and the position of the nipples. With good communication, the surgeon can guide the patient to choose an implant and procedure best suited to her individual body shape and tissues.

‘For a very thin woman, sub-muscular placement is best and most natural, as the edges of the implant will not be visible behind her lean breast tissue, and it also feels more natural,’ he says.

‘Women with longer torsos look best when the breasts are set higher on the chest, directly behind the nipples. For younger women who have not yet given birth and whose breasts are firm and round, a rounder implant rather than the teardrop shape looks best and most natural.’

However, Dr Norris insists there are no strict rules in achieving beautiful breasts as each case is individual. ‘It is important that the patient feels confident going into the procedure,’ he says.

‘Good outcomes for both surgeon and patient come from good communication between them from the start.’ **acsm**

