



**breasts**

# communication is key

Good communication between the surgeon and patient is essential to achieving optimum results, says Sydney cosmetic plastic surgeon **Dr Benjamin Norris**. Kirsty Doolan reports.

**A**ccording to Sydney cosmetic and plastic surgeon Dr Benjamin Norris, in addition to being technically skilled a good surgeon must also be an excellent listener and communicator.

'The patient/surgeon relationship is vital in achieving a natural-looking result that the patient will be happy with,' says Dr Norris. 'The surgeon needs to make the patient feel comfortable enough in the initial consultation so she can openly express what she dislikes about her breasts, as well as explaining what she wants to achieve through breast augmentation.'

## Reading between the lines

The consultation phrase prior to surgery should never be hurried, as this is the key to achieving the desired results, believes Dr Norris. 'I spend a lot of time during the consultation trying to understand what the patient considers to be a beautiful breast,' he says. 'A good surgeon needs to be able to facilitate discussion to allow the patient to get their viewpoint across.'

Dr Norris believes that every consultation should be tailored to the individual patient, and the surgeon should be able to hear what is not being said as well as what is being voiced.

'I always observe the patient's body language,' he explains. 'Not everyone is able to easily voice what they want, so I often ask my patients to demonstrate what they want, rather than just describe it.'

'This can involve telling me how they want to look in certain clothes, as well as showing me pictures in magazines of what they want to achieve.'

## Information age

'Most of my patients are well-informed about the breast augmentation process because they have researched it on the internet and in magazines,' says Dr Norris. 'It's the surgeon's role to ensure these patients have understood this information correctly and not misinterpreted it, but it can also be helpful for surgeon and patient communication and to gauge the look that the patient hopes to achieve.'

To create a natural-looking result, the surgeon will take into account the patient's desires, their existing breast tissue and the proportions of their body. 'Most patients want their bodies to look in proportion,' says Dr Norris. 'They want their breasts to be balanced with their shoulders and hips.'

Dr Norris conducts a range of measurements to assess which implant is best suited to the proportions of the patient. 'The tissue measurements allow me to choose the largest implant that is suited to the patient's frame, beyond which will look unnatural,' he explains. 'We then look at the range up to that point. There is such a vast range of implants available these days that it would be very unlikely not to find a suitable implant.'

## Credit crunch surgery

With the current world economy suffering, many patients may be more concerned with cost rather than optimal care and results. 'Patients should never allow financial concerns to determine the surgeon and type of implant they choose,' Dr Norris says. 'Happy, satisfied patients are those who can communicate easily with their surgeon to achieve an attractive, natural-looking result tailored to their individual needs.' **acsm**



BEFORE



AFTER breast augmentation by Dr Norris



BEFORE



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