beautiful breasts

Each patient has their own beauty ideals, which is why Sydney plastic and cosmetic surgeon **Dr Benjamin Norris** says communication and understanding individual goals is essential to achieving the desired result. Jessica Rule reports.

Sydney plastic and cosmetic surgeon Dr Benjamin Norris says breast ideals are subjective. 'A beautiful breast means different things to different people,' he says. 'It's not one uniform size or shape – each patient seeking breast augmentation has a unique view in her mind of what she wishes to achieve.'

According to Dr Norris, a patient usually arrives at their consultation with their own ideas to contribute, although it's the responsibility of a good surgeon to gauge exactly what these are in detail. 'My job is to extract that information through effective communication and listening to both the verbal and non-verbal cues the patient projects,' he explains. 'It's only through a good professional rapport that we can customise the procedure to achieve the outcome they desire.'

'Most of my patients are extremely well-informed about the breast augmentation process because they have read up on it in magazines and on the internet,' continues Dr Norris. 'It's the surgeon's role to ensure these patients have understood the information correctly and not misinterpreted it, however these resources can be beneficial to surgeon and patient communication. Together they can look at different websites and the surgeon can gauge what the patient's perception of "natural" is.'

The consultation phrase prior to surgery should never be hurried, as this is the key to achieving the desired results, believes Dr Norris. 'I ask the patient what specific attributes they like, which not only gives me the finer details but indicates whether they have realistic expectations. Those with realistic expectations of the outcomes are typically the happiest with their results.'

A good surgeon should take an individualised approach as opposed to treating each patient with the same process, adds Dr Norris. 'The result the patient wants determines not only the course of the consultation but also which type of implant to use, the placement of the implant and the post-operative care.'

Dr Norris says surgeons come to a consultation with their own views also. 'There are several key elements I believe are beautiful in a breast and I think many surgeons would agree,' he says. 'First, the nipple should sit on the peak of the breast mound and a gentle slope from the shoulder down to the peak of the breast should be achieved. Second, there should be a relatively full curve from the nipple to the fold under the breast and a gentle bulge should be seen at the sides when viewed front-on. Third, the breasts should have a natural-looking and defined cleavage.'

The next pivotal requirement is proportion, according to Dr Norris. 'The breasts must take cues from the physique and form of the patient, from the shoulders and torso in particular,' he says.

Dr Norris conducts a range of measurements to assess which implant is best suited to each individual patient. 'The tissue measurements allow me to choose the largest implant that is suitable for that patient, beyond which they will look unnatural. We then look at the range up to that point. There is a large variety of implants available today so it is virtually impossible not to find a suitable implant.'

According to Dr Norris, the key to a natural-looking augmentation is that it is not immediately obvious. 'Most women want their close friends and family to notice that they appear bigger, perhaps more in proportion, but they don't want to scream "boob job" to the stranger as they walk down the street,' he says.

'I believe the best way to achieve a natural-looking augmentation is for the surgeon to find a balance between the patient's goals and desires and their natural breast tissue. This includes selecting the right implant to be used and the placement of that implant.'

The 'natural' look also takes into consideration the patient's proportions. 'Most patients want to be proportional,' says Dr Norris. 'They want their breasts to match their shoulders and their hips.'

'There should be a balance between the patient's goals and desires and their natural breast tissue'

'The surgeon needs to make the patient feel comfortable and reassured enough so she can openly express what she dislikes about her breasts, as well as explaining what she wants to achieve through the augmentation. That's why the patient/surgeon relationship is vital to a natural-looking, beautiful result that the patient will be extremely happy with,' he concludes.

Dr Norris says a good surgeon will present all the options and inform the patient of what to expect both in the short and long terms following the procedure. 'Good communication doesn't stop when the operation has been completed,' he says. 'I am happy to see the patient after the procedure as often as she wishes.' **acsm**