

breasts

individual choices

SYDNEY PLASTIC AND COSMETIC SURGEON **DR BENJAMIN NORRIS** EXPLAINS THE IMPORTANCE OF PATIENT-DOCTOR COMMUNICATION IN ACHIEVING DESIRED RESULTS. CAROLINE SELWYN REPORTS.

A good surgeon needs to be more than technically skilled; they need to be a good listener and communicator, says Sydney cosmetic plastic surgeon Dr Benjamin Norris.

According to Dr Norris, the relationship between the patient and the surgeon is vital in achieving a natural-looking breast augmentation. '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 procedure,' he says.

Communication

The consultation phase prior to surgery is key to achieving results that satisfy both the patient and the surgeon and should not be hurried, according to Dr Norris. 'I spend quite

Artistic photo of actual patient of Dr Norris



a bit of time in consultation to determine what each patient considers to be a beautiful breast,' he says. 'A skilled surgeon has to be able to facilitate discussion to allow the patient to get across their viewpoint.'

According to Dr Norris, a patient usually arrives at the consultation with her 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 by 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 this information and not misinterpreted it, however these resources can be beneficial to surgeon and

patient communication. Together we can look at different websites and the surgeon can gauge what the patient's perception of "natural" is.'

Individual goals

A good surgeon should take an individualised approach as opposed to treating each patient with the same process, says 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 breast ideals are subjective. 'A beautiful breast means different things to different people. It's not one uniform shape or size – each patient seeking breast augmentation has a unique view in her mind of what she wishes to achieve.'

He explains, 'I ask them what specific attributes they like, which not only gives me the finer details but indicates whether the patient has realistic expectations. Those with



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AFTER breast lift and breast augmentation by Dr Norris to correct asymmetry



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AFTER breast lift and breast augmentation by Dr Norris to correct tuberous breast abnormality and asymmetry



breasts

realistic expectations of the outcomes are typically the happiest with their results.'

Dr Norris says surgeons also come to a consultation with their own views. 'There are several key elements I believe are beautiful in a breast,' 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.'

Natural-looking results

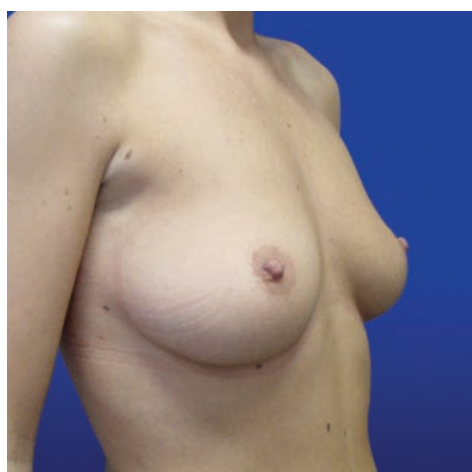
'The key to a natural-looking augmentation is that it is not immediately obvious,' Dr Norris says. 'Most women want their close friends and family to notice they appear bigger, perhaps more in proportion, but they don't want to scream "boob job" to the stranger as they walk down the street. I believe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

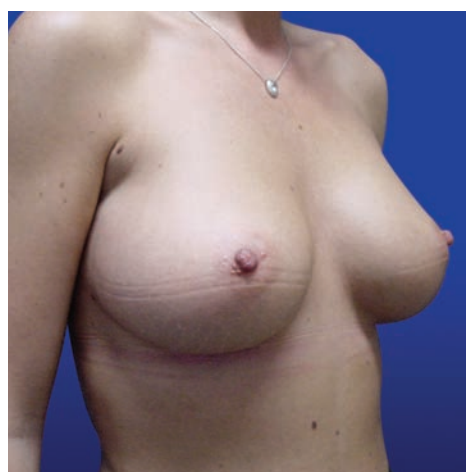
The 'natural' look also takes into consideration the proportions. 'Most patients want to be proportional,' says Dr Norris. 'They want their breasts to match their shoulders and their hips.'

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.'

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



BEFORE



AFTER breast augmentation by Dr Norris



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AFTER breast augmentation by Dr Norris to correct tuberous breast abnormality