

## *It's not all in your head*

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WELLNESS

If you've experienced an increase in health issues since getting breast implants you are not alone. If you have felt sick, tired, depressed, anxious, and/or in pain since getting breast implants, you are not alone. If you've had multiple doctor visits or multiple diagnoses since getting breast implants, you are not alone. If you've had multiple tests since getting breast implants only for them to come back clear, you are not crazy and it's not all in your head. Breast Implant Illness (BII) is a phenomenon that is well known to women all over the world with breast implants. Not always but often, at some point, women with implants start collecting health issues. Maybe it's headaches or rashes, hair loss or forgetfulness, weight gain or low energy, depression or anxiety, joint pain or digestive issues. For some it escalates to Hashimoto's, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus or some other diagnosed autoimmune disorder. These symptoms may start slowly and also be spaced years apart, which makes it difficult to pinpoint the implants as the root cause. Especially when doctors or specialists do not suggest or even *know* implants could be the cause. The implants can be saline or silicone, textured or smooth, don't need to be defective or ruptured for women to experience health issues, and symptoms can come at any time after implanting.

Essentially these autoimmune disorders are all manifestations of the immune system malfunctioning and appearing as various symptoms at different times. The names given to these diseases are simply classifications for the symptoms themselves, rather than a true diagnosis of what causes the disease and how to treat it. The true diagnosis is the root cause. If we can identify and address the underlying source, the root cause of our health issues, remove or address the source, we'll heal because the body was *designed* to heal. Miraculously, when the implants are removed, women report healing from most if not all of their BII symptoms. For some women, symptoms have reversed by the time they've returned home from their surgery! Skin and eyes clear, muscle and joint pains dissipate, Lupus numbers decrease, hair grows back - and that's how the hashtag started - #thehealisreal.

**Breast Implant Illness (BII)** is a term that refers to a collection of reported symptoms that present over time in many women with breast implants. Most of these same symptoms reverse with the removal of the implants.

**The list of symptoms includes but is not limited to:**

- |                        |                            |                              |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| hair loss, thinning    | throat issues              | night sweats                 |
| joint pain             | irregular heart beat       | breast cancer                |
| brain fog              | racing heart               | Lupus diagnosis              |
| digestive issues       | autoimmune diagnosis       | vertigo                      |
| fatigue                | broken teeth/dental issues | acne                         |
| anxiety                | fibromyalgia               | tremors                      |
| rashes                 | frequent UTI's             | lymph node swelling          |
| depression             | post nasal drip            | eyes red and/or puffy        |
| weight gain            | Raynaud's syndrome         | foot pain/neuralgia          |
| inflammation           | difficulty concentrating   | Sjogren's diagnosis          |
| sleep disturbances     | cold body temperature      | thinning skin                |
| recurrent infections   | tinnitus (ringing in ears) | hives                        |
| Epstein Barr diagnosis | breast pain                | Lyme disease                 |
| thyroid issues         | dry eyes                   | Suicide*                     |
| Hashimoto's diagnosis  | numbness in extremities    | Shoulder pain                |
| excessive thirst       | shortness of breath        | Multiple Sclerosis diagnosis |
| dry skin               | neck pain/stiffness        | Guillain-Barre diagnosis     |
| breathing difficulties | decreased libido           |                              |
| headaches              | insomnia                   |                              |
| muscle twitches        | strong body odor           |                              |
| arthritis diagnosis    | melasma                    |                              |

\*The FDA reports that risk of suicide increases after having implants for ten years. (9)

## Why do breast implants cause any type of illness?

In breast augmentation surgery, implants made of a silicone shell and filled with either silicone or saline (salt water) are inserted in front of or behind the muscle of the chest cavity for the purpose of fuller breasts, improved cup size after breastfeeding, the restoration of natural looking breasts after mastectomy, or any other personal reasons. More than 400,000 breast augmentation surgeries are done each year and of those, 25% are for reconstructive purposes. Medical devices of all kinds have been the cause of 80,000 deaths and over 1.7 million injuries,(1). After tens of thousands of women initiated lawsuits against breast implant manufacturers blaming them for a multitude of health issues, they continue to be used. Breast implants are a medical device that the body recognizes as a foreign object and then goes about fighting for the duration of implantation, and for many women, this triggers an autoimmune response as the body is fighting this foreign object. Our bodies create a layer of scar tissue as a defense to these invaders, that completely surrounds the implants and become the 'capsule' in which they sit. The FDA now lists on their website risks and complications related to breast implants even if doctors do not.

The implants are made not only of silicone, but there are a number of toxic other ingredients (2) including heavy metals (3) which leach into the body, causing inflammation and contributing to the autoimmune response. (4) The one primary goal for the immune system is to kill stuff. It kills pathogens, bacteria, viruses, parasites - that's its job. With implants, women are dealing with an onslaught of chemical toxicity, our immune system gets exhausted, which then triggers autoimmunity.

One study (8) in the Journal of Rheumatology found that women whose silicone implants had ruptured and leaked into the surrounding tissues were more likely to be diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a disorder that has similar symptoms to BII and is a very common diagnosis in women with breast implants, even without rupture

**Our culture's obsession with how women look is a systematic barrier to gender equality.**

**It steals women's time, energy, and money.**

**It keeps us facing the mirror instead of facing the world.**

**I implore you to stop. Join the revolution, and just stop.**

## Explanting

Deciding to remove your implants is a personal decision and you'll want to do your research on the process. There are plastic surgeons who specialize in the proper removal of the implant and the capsule together which is called en bloc. Like proper removal of toxic dental amalgam fillings, en bloc procedure is a very important part of explanting to avoid possible increased exposure to silicone and toxins. The capsule that forms around your breast implant is scar tissue the body creates to surround the implant as a protective measure since it's a foreign object. The en bloc procedure ensures that any toxic residue that could be inside the capsule is removed and the silicone or saline is contained by removing the implant with the capsule intact. This is especially important if there is a rupture within the capsule and that is often unknown until seen during the explant surgery. Not all surgeons believe this is a necessary part of the procedure so it's best to find a surgeon on the list of experts provided on the website, **BreastImplantHealing.com** who will use this best practice. It may not always be possible, but you'll have the best chance for success by using a surgeon who specializes in en bloc removal.

After removing the implants there is a space left where those implants used to reside. The body wants to fill that space, so fluids will normally accumulate there after surgery which can cause pain, discomfort, or increase recovery time. Most en bloc surgeons will insert temporary drains to remove the fluids externally. Not using drains and having pooling of fluids could slow down the healing process. Usually but not always, the drains are removed at post-op, 5-7 days after surgery. Resting and avoiding activity, especially activity involving the upper body and arms after surgery will help to decrease fluid. Some women need the drains in longer than others and drains are not always used, and it will be based on your surgeon's decision and experience.

The surgeon who specializes in proper en bloc removal will do his or her best to remove all of the capsule, even going so far as to scrape the capsule tissue off of the muscles or ribs to be thorough. Some microsurgeons who specialize in this will guarantee 100% removal. Some will take videos or photos during surgery for proof. As much as we all would like a guarantee, sometimes it's not possible to do a complete en bloc because one or more capsules is adhered to the ribs and make it impossible to remove everything in one piece. I don't want to imply that en bloc removal is optional or not necessary, I just know that life isn't perfect and even the best- intentioned surgeon isn't successful. That statement could be controversial for some, and some women will only see a surgeon with a guarantee, but I don't want women who weren't able to get an en bloc removal to think they can't heal.

## Questions for your Surgical Consultation

How many en bloc explants have you done, and do weekly?

Can I see before/after photos?

How successful are you with full en bloc?

What are the risks with explant?

What type of scars and where will the scars be placed?

Do you use drains? If yes, How long will I need drains?

Do you suggest a lift?

Will you take photos of my implants intact? And after opening the capsule?

Can I have the implants back? (If you want this)

How will a lift affect my healing time?

Will my implants be sent out to pathology? and what is the cost?

I offer an 8-week Breast Implant Illness program to get you prepared and ready for surgery using nutrition, natural therapies and remedies to set yourself up to heal and thrive after surgery.

Schedule a consultation call on [suewilliamswellness.com](http://suewilliamswellness.com) to discuss the program and where you are in your explant journey in more detail.