

Health Q&A For Women

Learning The Facts About Breast Implants

(NAPSA)—With manufacturers asking the Food and Drug Administration to approve the unrestricted use of silicone breast implants, health advocates say it's never been more important for women to get the facts about the controversial devices. To help, the Command Trust Network, a clearinghouse for breast implant information, offers the following answers to some frequently asked questions.

Q: Aren't breast implants already approved by the FDA?

A: The FDA approved saline breast implants in 2000, despite some concerns that their decision was based on only two-year's worth of safety data. Silicone breast implants have NEVER been approved. They are only available under certain restrictions created after women reported serious health problems following their surgeries.

Q: What are some common complications involved with implant surgery?

A: The most common complication is a painful tightening and hardening of the breast called capsular contracture that can sometimes lead to deformity or movement of the implant. Other problems include loss of nipple sensation, painful rashes and numbness. Silicone is also known to travel away from the breast after an implant ruptures.

The substance has been removed from various parts of the body including the uterus, liver and spleen.



Doctors say women talking about breast implants need to learn the facts.

Q: How long will implants last?

A: According to FDA research, almost two-thirds of silicone breast implants fail within 15 years.

Q: Are there any long-term health risks?

A: While some studies have raised questions about the link between silicone breast implants and some specific health problems, many researchers believe the health risks are still unknown. A National Institutes of Health study shows a 21 percent increase in cancer for women with silicone implants.

The study found the incidence of leukemia and stomach, cervical, vulvar and brain cancers was twice as high for women with implants. In 2001, an FDA team found that women suffering from ruptured silicone implants are much more likely to be diagnosed with certain painful illnesses.

For more information, visit www.commandtrust.org.