



the type of surgery, the amount of aftercare you require, and so on. The BIIIS give a guideline of between £3,500 and £5,000. One way to reduce the cost is to consider plastic surgery overseas. One clinic in Prague offered a total package from between £2,089 and £2,674. However, it is worth really doing your research on this one. You have to know where you stand once you return home if there should be any complications, and it is incredibly unwise to book a major operation without seeing the clinic and surgeon, so factor in the extra return flight to check out the clinic – and you may find it works out as well in the UK where you have more peace of mind. Boob-jobs aren't cheap, but economising on your aftercare could be very dangerous. Many companies offer finance options, which may suit your financial situation and make payment easier.

### The op, after-effects... and complications

The operation lasts a couple of hours, and how long you remain in hospital will vary from person to person – but you can expect to be in for at least one night.

When you wake up you will be covered in dressings and be expected to wear a special support bra until told otherwise. Initially there will be swelling and your cleavage area may feel very firm. The amount of pain you experience will depend on factors such as the surgical technique, your personal pain threshold, the amount of swelling – and smoking is also known to retard the healing process. The Department of Health lists the post-operative 'warning signs' (that is, things happening after your boob-job that require medical attention) as deflated breasts, offensive wound discharge and excessive swelling, and heat or pain in the breasts.

Breast sensation tends to change after the operation too, and many women report a loss of nipple sensitivity – but this will vary from person to person. It may also take a few months for the breasts to look natural.

### Telltale scarring

There are two possible types of scar that can linger as a reminder of a boob-job. The first is the incision scar, which may take a long time to heal and be very red, thick and even painful. This can remain after any surgical procedure, but you can take homeopathic arnica tablets to optimise healing, and applying vitamin E oil (or other oils specially formulated for scars) to the wound-mark can help reduce that angry look.

The second is an internal form of scarring known as 'capsular contracture'. The body will put up a wall of scar tissue (effectively a fibrous capsule) around any foreign body, in this instance, the breast

implant. This will eventually shrink (known as the capsular contracture), but there is no way of determining by how much – which may distort the implant. Capsular contracture is indicated by the hardening of the breast. It may need further surgery to remove the implant, the capsule of scar tissue, or both. This is the most common complication with breast-implant surgery, although the latest implants with a more textured shell have been developed specifically to reduce the amount of capsular contracture.

### Life expectancy

It is difficult to establish an absolute 'use-by' date for implants. They are expected to last for twenty to twenty-five years according to the BIIIS, but it is not fully known as yet. It is important to remember when considering a boob-job, that the implants do not last forever, and that down the line you must expect to shell out more of your hard-earned cash for replacements.

### The 'risk' of silicone implants

A number of women have reported serious illness after having silicone implants. Their symptoms included rashes, hair-loss, muscle-spasms and painful joints. As a result, an independent review was carried out to determine if silicone implants were dangerous. The review concluded that it could not be clinically proven, so the current medical thinking is that silicone implants are safe. However, for the results of a survey like this to be more accurate, many longer-term studies would need to be carried out on women over a period of up to twenty-five years, studying separate groups who do and do not have breast implants, to see if any developing illnesses are only found in those who have gone under the knife. You can read the entire review online, allowing you to draw your own conclusions.

### Non-surgical alternatives

Not sure that going under the surgeon's knife is for you? Can't afford implants? Terrified at the thought of it all? Here's a quick look at some other options:

- A good bra – there are so many options out there these days! There are ones that lift, ones with gel inserts – and don't forget chicken fillets and the like!
- Dusting a touch of bronzer down your cleavage creates the illusion that there's more there than there really is (think about how artists use

darker paint to give a 3-D impression – it's the same principle)

- The BRAVA system is a special bra, which claims to encourage the growth of breast tissue non-surgically. At around £790 it is pricy, but cheaper than a boob-job
- Perfect C is a herbal supplement which contains natural hormone-like substances. This appears to be a favourite with the celebrities. A three-month supply will cost you around £175
- Hypnosis. No, really – some women swear by it. It could set you back up to £1000, depending on how many treatments you have
- DermaBreast products are beauty products containing natural phytoestrogens, which they claim will solve any breast woe (cure sagginess, increase size and firmness etc). The full kit costs \$112 US, and they offer free worldwide shipping

### Final advice

So, still thinking of taking the plunge? Here are some tips:

- Research, research, research. Ask friends who have had boob-jobs for advice and recommendations; look for related forums on the internet, check out unbiased websites such as those of the Department of Health and the BIIIS
- Don't make any rash decisions. This is not a new pair of shoes; this is a major operation on your body
- Don't be afraid to see more than one surgeon. If you don't like the surgeon you have a consultation with, don't let him touch you with his scalpel
- Don't be tempted to settle for the cheapest option – it might not be the best for you. And be aware that this is a lifelong commitment; you will need to replace your implants at a later date – at further cost

*Remember that women do not all look the same, and this goes for your breasts as much as any other part of you. Without wishing to sound clichéd, celebrate your uniqueness!*

### INFORMATION

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4010394](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4010394)  
The Department of Health's Information Booklet

<http://www.biis.org>  
The Breast Implant Information Society

<http://www.silicone-review.org.uk>  
The Silicone Review website, containing all medical studies carried out on the risk of silicone implants

<http://www.mybrava.org.uk>  
The BRAVA non-surgical breast enhancement bra

<http://www.perfectcbreastenhancer.co.uk>  
The Perfect C breast enhancement supplement

<http://www.biggerbreastsenlargement.org.uk>  
DermaBreast natural breast enhancement products