



The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Raising Standards, Protecting Patients

7 June, 2018

Patient information: Breast implant associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma (BIA-ALCL)

Following media coverage in the Sunday Telegraph of 27 May 2018 and A Current Affair on 7 June 2018, patients with non-smooth breast implants may be worried.

The following information from the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS), may be helpful.

Key points:

- If you do have these implants, the risk to you remains very small.
- If you are considering breast implant surgery, you should be made aware that different implant surfaces have different complication rates and decide with your surgeon which type of implant is best suited to your individual circumstances.
- The advice of the ACCS, and that of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), the regulatory body for therapeutic goods in Australia and Division of the Australian Department of Health, on which the ACCS is represented, is that unless you have symptoms of a new enlargement of the breast or a breast lump there is no cause for concern or any need for a scan or other investigation.
- If you do have a lump or swelling of the breast, or if you have further questions, you should contact your surgeon. This applies for all types of breast implants.

Further information:

- The risk of getting BIA-ALCL is estimated to be between 1 in 1000 to 1 in 2500. These are the TGA figures released in 2016 and the new data from the Macquarie research group is consistent with this - it does not change them.



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- To put this into perspective, the lifetime risk for any Australian woman of getting breast cancer (with or without implants) is 1 in 8 and the risk of any Australian of developing a lymphoma in their lifetime is 1 in 50.
- A peer reviewed paper published in the journal Aesthetic Plastic Surgery also helps to put the risk into perspective. This showed the risk of death from skiing for one day was twice as high as having textured breast implants and the risk of driving for 8 hours was 40 times higher. More information is available [here](#) and here is a [video](#) of the authors explaining their findings.
- Regarding the risks for specific brands of implants, as the media has reported, previous claims by the Macquarie research group were proved to be incorrect. We do not yet know if this time the data will be accurate or not. It is important to note that even on their highest estimates, the risk is still less than 1 in 1000.
- It is increasingly believed by researchers that the vast majority of women in whom these cells are found, have a version of the condition that does not behave like a cancer but remains benign. [Here](#) is a recently published peer-reviewed paper the respected journal Aesthetic Plastic Surgery which explains the evidence for this. Consistent with this, the Macquarie researchers have also found that in 60% of patients who are diagnosed with BIA-ALCL, no evidence of cancer can be found when they have their implants removed. The surgeons in the video link above also support the view that most patients have a non-malignant version of the disease.