

Breast Implant Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL) is a rare type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma of which there are several sub-types. In 2016, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined this specific type of ALCL associated with silicone breast implants. ALCL is a lymphoma and not cancer of the breast tissue. In women with breast implants, found adjacent to the implant itself and contained within the fibrous capsule. The condition presents usually with a late onset seroma (fluid collection around the implant), and is treated with removal of the implant, and capsulectomy (removal of the scar tissue that forms around all implants), though some cases require chemotherapy. The first case was reported in 1997, yet it is important to note that breast implants have been used since 1962, with current estimations of 5 - 10 million women in the world with breast implants.

Breast implant associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL) is rare. As of August 2020; the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) received 78 reports of BIA-ALCL in patients with breast implants which meet the WHO diagnostic criteria for BIA-ALCL. In the UK, the estimated risk of BIA-ALCL is 1 per 20,000.

People with breast implants do not need to have them removed in the absence of any symptoms from this rare form of cancer. The advice is for patients to check for symptoms

such as lumps, swelling or distortions through regular self-examination and to consult their doctor if they have any concerns. All of the information to date suggests that women with breast implants have a very low but increased risk of developing ALCL compared to women who do not have breast implants.

Smooth or Textured implants- The facts

In most of the world including Europe and Australia, the preference is for the use of textured implants in 90% patients, with only 10% smooth being used. The current breakdown of implant usage in the USA is 87% smooth and 13% textured. This discrepancy is due to the moratorium imposed by the FDA in USA in 1992, which led to US surgeons almost exclusively using smooth saline and of late, silicone smooth implants; whereas the rest of the world progressively continued to use textured implants.

Capsular contracture continues to be the leading cause of breast implant reoperations.

The key benefit of using textured implants is reduced capsular contracture. As textured implants provide frictional resistance to movement, they also help to stabilise the implant pocket and reduce skin stretch and 'bottoming out' in the lower part of the breast over time. Smooth implants, on the other hand, can feel

softer, are more easily placed with smaller incisions, however, will have greater movement with some drift to the sides of the breast (lateral slip). They tend to settle in the lower part of the breast stretching the lower breast skin envelope.

Though textured implants have predominantly been used in the UK and Europe, the concern for the rare occurrence of BIA-ALCL has started to influence the discussion regarding the use of smooth vs textured implants.

You should discuss with your surgeon what is best for your body shape and breast skin envelope.

BIA-ALCL

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