

## **The Question I Urge All Doctors to Ask Their Female Patients**

This is a plea to doctors – well, maybe all doctors except plastic surgeons. I would like to urge doctors to specifically ask your female patients a question: Mrs. Smith, do you have breast implants?

Why do I exclude plastic surgeons? Let me explain.

My plea is focused on other general care practitioners, rheumatologists, endocrinologists, neurologists, psychologists, chiropractors, etc., who are following women for symptoms of illness. When we, as women, show symptoms of illness, we do not run to our plastic surgeon. We seek advice and treatment from other practitioners. It makes sense that I would like to make a plea to all of you.

The use of social media has allowed women worldwide to join together and discuss breast implants. Several websites and Facebook groups are now focusing on women who would like to discuss breast implant illness and Explantation – or the removal of their breast implants.

Why are women searching for these groups? They are desperate for answers. They are seeking advice about their symptoms and illnesses and don't know where else to turn. These women have seen doctor after doctor in regards to their symptoms and not getting any answers. What do they have in common? The first

answer – breast implants. The second answer – a long list of common symptoms.

What symptoms are these women describing? They can include common symptoms such as fatigue, anxiety, joint pain, headaches, vertigo, hair loss, recurrent illness, skin rashes, breast pain, brain fog, depression, swollen lymph nodes.

They may exhibit symptoms of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Multiple Sclerosis, Thyroid disorders, Connective Tissue Disorders. Some of the most commonly diagnosed illnesses are Hashimoto's Thyroiditis and Lupus – both autoimmune disorders.

You might decide to run a whole panel of tests. Some of these women are getting positive lab results but many are not. Many are suffering from the symptoms and still have completely normal lab results. This generally results in women being sent away with no answers, sent to psychologists for evaluation, or sent to other specialists in pursuit of additional options.

Who are these patients? These are women who have ANY type of breast implant. It doesn't matter if it is saline or silicone. All implants are encased in a silicone shell. It doesn't matter how long they have had breast implants. Some women are starting to seek treatment for illness early on after augmentation and some are seeking treatment many years down the road. It doesn't even matter why they had breast augmentation. While most receive

implants for cosmetic purposes, many have undergone surgery for reconstructive purposes or as a post-mastectomy procedure.

Why should you consider the breast implant factor? I know that the proper response by physicians is that the FDA has approved the use of implants, therefore, they are safe. I'm not asking you to discredit the FDA, discredit any studies, or discredit other physicians. I'm simply asking that you take this question into consideration. Some women might not even list breast augmentation on their list of previous surgeries. I won't even really get into the discussion about the studies and the FDA. The fact is that women with breast implants are suffering from a long list of common symptoms. This is the same story that has been told for many years. Most physicians will not recognize "breast implant illness" because it is not a clearly defined illness or disorder in the eyes of the medical community. The proof comes when these women remove their breast implants and they show improvement in general health and in relief of some or all of their symptoms.

My plea is this: If you have a patient who exhibits these symptoms, follow your normal treatment path but ask them if they have implants. If for no other reason, ask them out of curiosity. If they do, please inform them that there are women who are sympathetic and willing to listen. They can search Explantation, Explant, Breast Implant Illness on Facebook or the internet. They can watch videos on YouTube by Dr. Susan Kolb and Dr. Edward Melmed. You don't have to be an advocate of

breast implant illness to refer your patients for outside support. You don't have to imply that there is any correlation at all. I am simply asking that you keep an open mind about the possibility that some of your patients are seeking treatment from you for illnesses and coincidentally have breast implants.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope that you will keep this plea in the back of your mind for future reference.

Jamee Cook 12/17/15

The Implant Truth Survivors Committee