

# Trying Implants on for Size

**C**hoosing a new pair of breasts may make the quest for perfect-fitting jeans seem like a cinch in comparison. Implant patients' dissatisfaction with size is responsible for about a third of all revision operations. In the majority of these cases, the women wished their breasts appeared larger.

For years, prospective patients trying to figure out their desired size have stuffed bras with rice-filled socks. Now, many doctors offer women actual trial implants to place inside their bras and test under their clothes. Plastic surgeon David Hidalgo likes his patients to wear a gray or white T-shirt over the implant-filled bra because darker colors don't always

"show the three-dimensional volume well," he says. Allergan offers a kit of implants in different sizes for potential customers to try on at home.

The problem with this technique? "Many patients have an unrealistic idea of how big they can go without causing physical complications," says Bradley Bengtson, a plastic surgeon in Grand Rapids, Michigan. To determine the ideal implant size for each patient, Bengtson and two other plastic surgeons, William P. Adams, Jr., in Dallas, and Steven Teitelbaum, have developed a simplified method, called the Implant Selector. It involves taking measurements of the breasts' width, the distance from the nipple to the crease under the breast, and the skin's elasticity (the more pliable the skin, the larger the implant can be), Teitelbaum says. Based on this

data, the doctor creates a computer simulation of the patient, which shows her at different angles with the implant size and shape the surgeon deems most suitable for her frame. Although the approach hasn't been evaluated in published research, the doctors say it has decreased reoperation requests.

Patients most often say they want a C cup, but implants simply come in ccs—as in cubic centimeters—and the same volume can look smaller or larger on women with different builds. In any case, once a woman decides, for example, that a 350-cc implant looks right and her surgeon determines by whatever system that it's safe, some doctors suggest going slightly larger: Adding at least 25 ccs compensates for the bra's volume and compression of the implant once it's under the tissue, Hidalgo explains.

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