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Silicone implants

Solid silicone (dimethylsiloxane) implants have been use in facial cosmetic surgery since the 1950's.

Solid silicone implants are different to liquid-filled silicone breast implants. Solid silicone implants do not leach into the body and have been used for many years in medical procedures such as joint prostheses and heart valve replacement.

What is silicone?

Silicone is a synthetic polymer that when used in medical implants comes in the form of fluid, gels and rubbers. When manufactured into products for facial implants they are solid compounds, yet flexible and very durable. They are manufactured in varying degrees of hardness.

There are many manufacturers of silicone implants, some of the popular ones include:

- Implantech
- Advanced Bio-Technologies, Inc.
- Allied Biomedical.

Where can silicone implants be used?

Silicone facial implants are used to augment soft tissue areas, not the underlying facial bony structure. The silicone implant is chemically inert and the body treats it as a foreign object. Once inserted, scar tissue forms around the implant. Thus most people tolerate silicone implants very well.

Facial augmentation with silicone implants has been used for the following corrections:

- Cheek
- Chin
- Jawline
- Nose

How are silicone implants inserted?

The procedure is carried out at your doctor's rooms. The length of time will depend on what corrections are being made.

Procedure for silicone implantation

1. Implantation site is prepared with an antiseptic solution.
2. Local anaesthetic is used to numb the site.
3. Small incision is made at the implantation site.
4. Tissue from the area is gently lifted to create a pocket for the implant.
5. Implant is inserted and trimmed if necessary to fit the requirements of the correction.
6. Implant may be secured in place by fixing the implant to the bone with titanium screws.
7. Sutures may be used also to secure the implant. These are removed after 5-7 days.

How long do silicone implants last?

Silicone implants are considered to be permanent. However, as the body ages and thinning of the skin occurs, the implant may start to show through and you may be able to feel it. In addition, there is always the possibility of infection even years after implantation. Because silicone implants do not integrate with the skin tissue and they are encapsulated within scar tissue, their removal is relatively easy compared with other implant types.

Are there any side effects from silicone implants?

Implants are usually well tolerated. You can expect some discomfort directly after the implantation. There may be some swelling, aching, and numbness but these usually resolve after a week or so.

The following complications may rarely occur:

- Infection of the implant site
- Extrusion (part of the implant comes through the skin)
- Shifting or buckling of implant
- Induration (hardening of the area operated on)
- Seroma (dense pocket of fluid below the skin)
- Inadequate healing
- Overcorrection or undercorrection

Related information

On DermNet NZ:

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Other websites:

emedicine, the online textbook

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DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.

If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a [dermatologist](#) for advice.

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