

# The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery Statement on Breast Implant Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma

Surgeons now have evidence that a rare type of cancer called Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (ALCL) is associated with breast implants more commonly than was previously thought. 46 cases have been diagnosed in Australia. The known risk is still small, less than 1 in 1000 patients. Worldwide, textured surface implants, which have been used since 1991, are present in the vast majority of cases. Cases have also been seen with polyurethane foam covered implants.

Most patients present with a sudden swelling of the breast caused by a fluid collection called a seroma. Although most patients with seroma do not have ALCL, all patients with seroma should have an ultrasound scan and the fluid analysed.

Most patients with ALCL do not have invasive cancer and it can be cured by the removal of the implants and the capsule or membrane surrounding the implants. A minority of patients can develop invasive cancer and most of these are cured by additional chemotherapy and or radiotherapy. Deaths are very rare but have occurred.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration convened an expert panel to provide advice about ALCL and the ACCS has been an active participant in this panel. The latest TGA advice can be accessed at <https://www.tga.gov.au/all-alerts>

"The new findings are important and the information we give to patients, surgeons and GPs needs to be updated" said the ACCS spokesperson and Chairman of the College's ALCL Safety Committee, Dr Daniel Fleming.

"We first raised concerns about this in June 2015 and have worked with the TGA and other groups to confirm our suspicions.

Women with implants should be made aware of the new information but should also remember that more than 99.9% of women with breast implants will not get ALCL. The risk is still more than 100 times less likely than the risk of any Australian woman of developing breast cancer in her lifetime which is about 1 in 8."

## Key messages:

- The risk of a type of lymphatic cancer called ALCL is increased by breast implants.
- The known risk is less than 1 in 1000 patients.
- ALCL is not breast cancer.
- The overwhelming majority of women with breast implants will never get ALCL.
- Women who do get ALCL are usually cured by the removal of their implants the surrounding membrane.
- Women with no symptoms do not need to do anything.
- If you develop an obvious swelling of your implanted breast it is unlikely you have ALCL but you should see your doctor and get an ultrasound scan.
- Surgeons should inform patients considering breast augmentation of the risk of ALCL.

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