

Silicone, saline breast implants linked to rare form of cancer: warns US FDA

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US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently warns about both silicone and saline breast implants as they can cause a rare form of cancer, called anaplastic large cell lymphoma (ALCL). The agency is looking into 350 reports linking the disease to both types of implants.

Breast augmentation is the second most popular cosmetic procedure among women, after liposuction, with more than 300,000 procedures performed in 2015. This means the cancer would be very rare even with 300 cases over 10 years or longer.

According to the agency, "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. It is easily treated if caught early enough. Most cases of breast implant-associated ALCL are treated by removal of the implant and the capsule surrounding the implant and some cases have been treated by chemotherapy and radiation."

Suspensions have been growing that implants might cause ALCL, which is a type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The FDA first started looking into the possibility in 2011. At that time, the FDA knew of so few cases of this disease that it was not possible to determine what factors increased the risk. But now there's more information, including hundreds of complaints and a World Health Organization report pointing to breast implants as a possible cause. Breast implants approved in the US can be filled with either saline or with silicone gel. They come in different sizes and shapes and have either smooth or textured surfaces (shells). There are 231 reports that included information on the implant surface. Of these, 203 were reported to be textured implants and 28 reported to be smooth implants. If you have breast implants, there is no need to change your routine medical care and follow-up," added FDA.

"Follow your doctor's instructions on how to monitor your breast implants. If you notice any changes, contact your health care provider promptly to schedule an appointment. Get routine mammography screening and ask for a technologist specifically trained in performing mammograms on patients with breast implants," the FDA advised.

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the Plastic Surgery Foundation are making a list of implant patients who

develop ALCL. "The research will also focus on identifying potential risk factors and criteria detection and management of this disease," the groups say on a website devoted to the matter.

In 2011, the FDA reported that one in five women who had silicone breast implants for cosmetic purposes - and half of those who got implants after a mastectomy - needed surgery to remove the implants within a decade.