



MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, 17 January 2012

Clear new guidance on PIP breast implants issued for patients and doctors

Authoritative new professional and patient guidance for all women who have received a PIP breast implant has been released today (Tuesday, 17 Jan 2012) by the professional bodies representing surgeons. The new guidance provides patients with practical advice on what to expect and their rights, indicates to GPs where to refer different groups of patient and advises surgeons on treatment.

The guidance goes beyond current government advice aimed at patients with symptoms to give additional practical advice for the majority of patients who do not. Key points include:

- All patients should be able to have an assessment by a surgeon regardless of whether they have symptoms.
- If a patient requests removal – they should expect to get this, regardless of the presence of any symptoms. If a patient wants time to make up their minds this should be respected – surgery to remove implants must not be a time-limited “take it or leave it” offer.
- Scans should only be used as a tool to assist patients make a decision and only take place after the patient has had a consultation with a surgeon. Scanning alone is not a reliable enough tool for detecting failure rates in breast implants.
- Reaffirms the surgical association’s view that all clinics have an ethical and moral duty of care to offer these patients treatment without charge.
- Advice to GPs on where to refer patients with different symptoms to ensure they get most appropriate treatment.

The document, *Poly Implant Protheses (PIP) Breast Implants: Joint surgical statement on Clinical Guidance for Patients, GPs and Surgeons* has been jointly endorsed by the Association of Breast Surgery, British Association of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgeons, British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, Federation of Surgical Speciality Associations and the Royal College of Surgeons.



Consultant Plastic Surgeon Tim Goodacre, Head of Professional Standards at the British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (BAPRAS) said: *"It has been a distressing time for all the women caught up in the PIP breast implant issue. We hope that this comprehensive guidance, for both patients and healthcare professionals, will ensure we can conclude this effectively and with compassion. We must now look at how cosmetic products and interventions are regulated in the UK more broadly so that we can avoid a repeat of this scenario. BAPRAS continues to be driven by patient safety and professional standards and we look forward to the next meeting of the Expert Group so we can discuss these points in more detail."*

According to consultant plastic surgeon and BAAPS President Fazel Fatah: *"We are delighted to jointly provide clear surgical guidance that removes any ambiguity about the right course of action, not just for women who have PIP breast implants, but to all those who become involved in their care and treatment - including GPs and surgeons. Our message also reinforces the importance of commitment to duty of care for anyone providing private health services to the public. The BAAPS remains steadfast in our recommendation for precautionary removal of these defective implants."*

Dick Rainsbury, President of the Association of Breast Surgery, said: *"ABS welcomes the clear guidance provided for patients and their surgeons through this document"*

The guidance is available from the RCS website at: <http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/publications/docs/pip-statement/>

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Notes to editor:

If you have any queries please contact:

Matthew Worrall – Email: mworrall@rcseng.ac.uk; T: 020 7869 6047

Katie Bennett – Email: kbennett1@rcseng.ac.uk; T: 020 7869 6052

Out-of-hours: 07966 486 832