

Information about textured breast implants and BIA-ALCL



There is a rare association between having textured breast implants and a type of cancer called Breast Implant-Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL). It has been in the news recently because Health Canada is doing a safety review of breast implants. As part of this review, Health Canada is considering suspending the license for BIOCELL® textured breast implants made by a company called Allergan. The most recent update from Health Canada on this subject is dated April 25, 2019.

What is BIA-ALCL?

BIA-ALCL stands for “Breast Implant-Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma”. It is an uncommon cancer found only in patients who have textured breast implants.

Scar tissue naturally forms a “capsule” around breast implants as part of the healing process. BIA-ALCL is a cancer that can occur in the fluid or scar tissue inside the capsule. BIA-ALCL is not a cancer of the breast tissue.

When caught early, BIA-ALCL can be cured in most patients by removing the implant. It is generally a slow-growing cancer. While it can affect nearby lymph nodes, it does not tend to affect tissues further away.

Symptoms usually happen in one breast. The symptoms may progress as follows:

- Noticeable swelling in breast or increase in breast size
- Breast may become tense & firm
- Breast pain
- A lump in the breast or armpit that can be felt on self-exam

Risks may differ based on the company that made the implant. Your primary care provider or surgeon can help you to understand your risk and make individual recommendations.

What should I do if I have textured breast implants?

There are no current recommendations from Health Canada to have textured breast implants removed or replaced if you do not have symptoms. This is because BIA-ALCL is quite rare. Breast implants have been studied clinically around the world and are generally considered safe.

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Continue to monitor your breast health. This includes checking your breasts for any changes and following the screening recommendations from the [BC Cancer Breast Screening program](#). No extra testing is recommended.

If you notice any changes in your breasts, contact your primary care provider or surgeon right away.

Your surgeon is also available to answer questions, provide examinations and make individual recommendations.

What are my options if I have textured implants?

Allergan has a BIOCELL® Replacement Warranty for Canadian patients looking to replace their BIOCELL® textured implants with smooth implants. This program will run until July 24, 2021. See the [Allergan BIOCELL® Replacement Warranty](#) document for details.

This does not include the cost of the surgical fee, because there is no recommendation from Health Canada to have textured breast implants removed or replaced if you do not have symptoms.

What should I do if I am considering breast implants?

Each person is different and has different needs. Your surgeon will speak with you about BIA-ALCL and your options for implants. This will help you to choose the right type of surgery for you.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

If you notice any changes in your breasts, contact your primary care provider or surgeon right away.

For more information:

- Health Canada: Recalls and safety alerts: [Health Canada advises Allergan of its intent to suspend its licenses for BIOCELL® breast implants as a precautionary measure](#)
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons:
 - [BIA-ALCL resources for clients](#)
 - [BIA-ALCL resources for clinicians](#)
- Allergan Patient Resources:
 - [FAQ: For Patients With Breast Implants by Allergan](#)
 - [FAQ: For Patients Considering Breast Implants by Allergan](#)
 - [Allergan's BIOCELL® Replacement Warranty](#)