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## A Day at the Doctor

### Doing your Homework before heading to 'Medico Land'

by Unknown Author

Article appeared in Polare magazine: December 1993 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



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**W**ell girls, we have all been through the harrowing ordeal of going to the doctor for our appointment as today's guinea pig with mystery symptoms. I have lately been confronted with our gracious medical fraternity and have run across some amazing discoveries.

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My mystery symptom for the day was granulation of the breasts (prosthesis to be exact). These well loved, often appreciated, sometimes heavy breasts have succumbed to old age. You may say "well what's the problem?" The problem is that when these little beauties were bestowed on my good person, nobody told me (or anyone else for that matter) of how the product can and does break down over time.

Naturally, when a foreign body is inserted, our own defence mechanisms (immune system) fly into action to defend the body against the intruder. The defence takes many forms, mine was that the bag did not rupture but granulated instead. This is where the surface breaks down and small pin holes develop allowing small droplets to either escape or rest on the bag surface, thus forming the granulation. Sounds pretty straightforward doesn't it? Not so. There is one complication that no one has calculated yet and that is dealing with the doctors while they deal with you.

Not knowing anything about silicosis at the time, I ventured into 'medico land' for the diagnosis. What an exercise in frustration it has turned out to be. It seems that doctors, including the plastic surgeons, really have little knowledge of the product, how it can break down or the physical effects of age and faulty products on the individual. Litigation cases are being filed around the world for women who have had problems with implants. No two cases are the same and symptoms and side-effects (physical and psychological) are different for each individual. The real grassroots frustration comes with presenting these symptoms to your doctor without you being fobbed off or made to sound like some whinging old thing with nothing better to do.

The people I have dealt with have been at the top of their chosen profession and can assure me that nothing serious has happened. They confirm that there is granulation but fail to explain where the granulation came from and what the long-term effects are. All of my knowledge has come from reading material from the United States where discoveries are being made and documented. This has taken its time to circulate to the girl on the street and definitely even more time to reach our doctors that we trust so much.

I have found that I am the educator this time around with more questions and arguments than they care to hear. By no means have I started a personal war on the medicos with the argument over implants but it does make you think: who's fooling who? So far I've been patronised, offered good deals for a quick removal, had many comments on how great they look but no medical diagnosis of the physical condition of them or me; "Cosmetically great", "physically lumpy" and "no comment". Leaves one feeling a bit insecure.

Personally I hope the little dears hang on (or down) for as long as the bolts hold but it would be nice to say: "Hey, my breasts have taken on a life form of their own, not to mention a new shape" and hear a word of support in return.

When presenting other symptoms that could be related to the prosthesis I am given a stumped look, an assurance that they are cosmetically okay and no other avenue for tests or enquiries. Sound frustrating? It is!

The cost is another thing that doesn't sit well with me. The money that I've paid out in time, travel and wear and tear on the old body does add up. And let's not overlook the physical discomfort.

Anyway, this is the trip to 'medico land'. So be warned, don't take everything on face value and if you can, do your homework.

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