

# INSTABREAST

## The 24-Hour Breast Augmentation

In a world ruled by immediacy and non-permanency, where Snapchat and Instagram are immensely popular - “instant” and “on-demand” are not only buzz-words, but a *modus operandi* for the present generation. In such a world, the idea of an immediate but temporary breast augmentation is instantly appealing (\*grin\*). Is this new medical procedure a safe way to “test drive” a breast augmentation? Is it just a marketing fad or is it a potentially harmful procedure to be avoided?

**DR MARSHALL MURDOCH** investigates.

### What is it?

InstaBreast is a new and controversial temporary breast augmentation procedure. The procedure was described by New York plastic surgeon, Dr Noman Rowe. As an office procedure, it involves the injection of saline solution into the breast tissues to increase volume. The fluid is slowly absorbed into the blood stream over the course of a few days and the volumising effect is then reversed. Interesting names, such as the Cinderella breast augmentation or the lunch-time breast augmentation have been attributed to this procedure. Whether this procedure was inspired by extreme body modification is unclear, but a striking similarity is noted with such procedures.

One particular procedure, the Bagel-Head (which was pioneered in Canada but popular in the Japanese underground fetish scene), essentially involves the same procedure but done on the forehead.

### Why do it?

Why would a patient consider such a short-lived procedure? Well, Dr Rowe described this procedure as “an excellent way for women to see how their body might look before deciding on surgery”. It would appear that the primary indication (according to the inventor of the procedure) is to “test drive” a breast augmentation,

before committing to an implant size. Yet most plastic surgeons would consider this a rather extreme method of determining the optimal size. Many implant companies offer “sizing kits” for such purposes - and an even better way of determining the potential effect of an implant is the use of a virtual reality augmentation, made possible by 3-D medical imaging systems (such as the Canfield VECTRA). Obviously other reasons, such as important social events, may also be considered by prospective patients.

### Is it safe?

As with any new procedure, people may wonder if this is safe. The injected saline is obtained from sterile, pyrogen-free, intravenous solution bags.

As long as sterile technique is maintained, the risks of infection are low. However, although saline is almost isotonic to human tissue fluid in absolute numbers, the respective concentrations of sodium and chloride are quite different and this may have both local tissue and systemic effects. Of greater concern, is the long term damage to the collagen and

elastin fibres of the skin and subcutaneous tissue of the breast, which may result from stretching the tissue beyond the point of elastic recoil. This in turn may lead to long term droopiness.

Interestingly, body modification artists, (who have been practicing this technique in other anatomical regions since 2007), report that this potential side effect has not occurred. Whether this will be the case with breast tissue remains an unanswered question.

acidosis. In a healthy patient this effect may be negligible, but its effect in a compromised patient should not be underestimated. Additional tissue effects, such as the tissue and vascular toxicity of high-chloride ion solutions are of some concern.

### Would you recommend this procedure?

Prospective patients should be aware that although it is offered on website of Dr Rowe, there are no scientific publications

*“An excellent way for women to see how their body might look before deciding on surgery”* Dr Rowe describing the procedure

### What are the potential risks?

Saline is a relatively safe solution of sodium chloride (salt). As noted above, the chloride ion concentration is higher than either blood or tissue fluid.

This has several physiological effects, such as a lower pH - to a rather acidic pH of 5.5 (normal arterial pH is 7.41) and infusion of a significant volume may cause a metabolic

documenting the safety, efficacy and potential complications of the procedure. Presently, it would seem that the safety record is limited to the anecdotal experience of its inventor, and therefore should be considered a highly experimental procedure at best.

Moreover, (to the knowledge of both the author and the Association of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons of Southern Africa), there are currently no plastic surgeons in South Africa who perform this procedure.

Most medical professionals would recommend avoiding such procedures until a reasonable body of good quality medical data is available. Patients who are considering a breast augmentation are advised to seek the opinion of a qualified plastic surgeon and consider a well-established technique. 



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