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CRIME LAB

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BALDWIN WIN?

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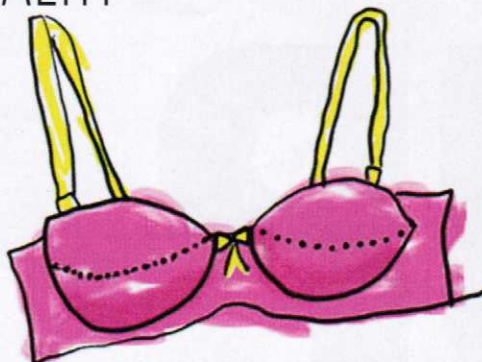
INDIAN, MEXICAN, CHINESE,
THAI, SERBIAN, MIDDLE
EASTERN & MORE!

BY ANN CHRISTENSON



SHRIMP PHO FROM
PHO HAI TUYET

|||||



Breasts of Burden

For women suffering from severe back pain, breast reduction surgery is a popular solution. **BY ERIN O'DONNELL**

For Bonnie Matthews, 34, work was agony. Her job as an operating room nurse required her to stand eight hours a day, but without fail, two hours into every shift, her back would ache unbearably. The cause? She suspected her F-cup breasts.

Looking for relief, Matthews entered the SpineCare program at Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin, where she addressed her back pain by working with a physical therapist and a chiropractor on techniques such as core strengthening. But the pain persisted, and practitioners confirmed that her heavy breasts – size-F breasts can weigh upward of 5 pounds each – were the problem. Matthews opted to undergo breast reduction surgery in May 2007.

U.S. plastic surgeons performed more than 130,000 breast reductions in 2010, making it one of the top five cosmetic surgical procedures in the country for women, according to The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. “It’s not just for women who have very large breasts like E-cups, F-cups or G-cups,” says Dr. John Hijjawi, a plastic surgeon with Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin. He specializes in breast surgery and performed Matthews’ reduction. For a petite woman, he says, even a C-cup can trigger severe back, neck or shoulder pain. Oversized breasts cause other problems, too: Women can’t exercise (the bouncing is too painful), they can’t find clothes that fit, and some develop severe rashes under their breasts.

If a woman is a good candidate for the surgery – no serious health problems and isn’t a current smoker – the surgeon will decide how much tissue to remove to relieve symptoms but leave her with breasts that match her frame. For example, B-cup breasts won’t look proportional on a large woman, says Dr. Mark Blake of Milwaukee’s Clinic for Cosmetic Surgery.

Surgery often involves three incisions on each breast: one around the areola (the dark part around the nipple), a vertical incision from the areola to the breast’s underside, and one along the crease under the breast. Hijjawi says this popular approach leaves the top of the breasts scar-free.

Patients usually go home the day of the surgery or, at most, spend one night at the hospital. But most need pain medication for several days. “We’re cutting through glandular tissue, which, when swollen, is quite tender,” Blake says. Most patients take about a week off work and are instructed to not engage in strenuous activity for at least three weeks.

Many women experience nipple numbness or hypersensitivity that subsides within six months, but “it may be permanent in a small minority of women,” Hijjawi says. The surgery may also limit a woman’s ability to breast-feed. “If you absolutely can’t accept the possibility of not being able to breast-feed,” Hijjawi says, “you shouldn’t have a breast reduction until you’re done with that phase of your life.”

Hijjawi estimates insurance covers breast reduction surgery in 90 percent of cases, but insurers want women to try other strategies first, such as custom-fit bras, physical therapy and nonsteroidal, anti-inflammatory medicine such as ibuprofen.

For Matthews, she emerged from surgery with breasts between a C- and D-cup – much more suitable for her 5-foot-7 frame – and says the results were “life-altering.” Her back pain vanished, and two weeks after surgery, she bought a button-down shirt for the first time in years. She was also awed by the care Hijjawi took to leave her with attractive breasts: “They could not look more natural,” she says.

“You’re altering your body, and that’s a big deal, but the benefits are huge,” Matthews says. “The only change I would make is, I wouldn’t have waited as long to do it.” ■

HEALTH +TIPS

White Fruits Reduce Stroke Risk

Eating white-fleshed fruits and vegetables high in fiber and antioxidants – such as apples, pears and cauliflower – can help lower your risk of stroke by 52 percent compared with foods of other colors such as oranges and lettuce, reports a study in *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*.



Sleep Deeply to Avoid Hypertension

Men who don’t get enough slow-wave sleep have an increased risk of hypertension, found a study in *Hypertension*. An important dip in blood pressure occurs during slow-wave sleep, helping regulate blood pressure during the day. Snoring, sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome and medications can hinder this essential sleep.

Lifestyle Changes Help Virility

The same lifestyle changes that help reduce risk of heart disease – eating right, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight – can also combat erectile dysfunction, found a study in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*. Erectile dysfunction may be an early indicator of heart disease; the risk factors are the same.

Heart-Smart Spaghetti

Researchers have developed a new type of pasta that may help fight heart disease, reports a study in *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. Made with barley flour, the new noodles contain more fiber and antioxidants than traditional semolina-based pasta. ■

– Julie Sensat Waldren