

## The Real picture after breast surgery

Real picture after surgery THE title of plastic surgeon Prof Donald Marshall's book is an eye-catcher. But when curious men pause to flick through the pages of *Your Breasts and Plastic Surgery*, they're usually quick to put it down again. The reason, according to Prof Marshall, is that there are no photographs of buxom women. Prof Marshall, who is based at Kew's Cotham Private Hospital, wrote the book to dispel myths and misconceptions about breast plastic surgery and to open the eyes of women contemplating going under the knife. Prof Marshall said he deliberately avoided using "after shots" of perfect breasts, because they simply didn't exist. "One of the biggest responsibilities of the plastic surgeon is to bring people's expectations to something that is realistic," he said. "So much of what is seen in the media is very superficial and really doesn't give patients the overall picture of what may or may not happen." Prof Marshall said scarring was an unavoidable consequence of any operation, and breast surgery was no different. He said the level of scarring varied from patient to patient and even left breast to right breast. But scars were often not visible in photographs in magazines and on the internet. "If a patient has only seen beautiful results, say from an augmentation, then they are going to have very unrealistic expectations," Prof Marshall said. "It's very common, and that's why about 30 per cent of patients who have breast augmentation will have another operation within five years. They didn't expect it would be anything other than absolutely perfect." Prof Marshall said that also contrary to popular belief, his job was not all about giving women enormous breasts. He said most women who wanted an enlargement had extremely small breasts or droopy breasts after breastfeeding their children. The other most common forms of breast surgery were reductions and reconstructions. Prof Marshall said that while women who had augmentation generally did it to please a partner, women who had a reduction did it to please themselves. Reconstructions were performed on women who had lost breasts to cancer and could help lessen the psychological impact of losing the breast. But Prof Marshall said all the procedures carried risks. As well as the unpredictable nature of scars, there was also a small risk of infection and, in those who had implants, a small risk of rejection. With reductions, the more tissue removed, the greater the risk the wound could break down, heal slowly and cause more obvious scarring. Prof Marshall, who has 40 years' experience, said costs also had to be considered -- augmentation costs about \$10,000. Reductions had a similar price tag, but Medicare and private health insurance rebates were possible because the procedure was considered to have a medical component. Prof Marshall said he hoped his book was a balanced reference and answered many of the questions women either forgot to ask or their surgeon did not address. &nbsp;

## About the Author

YOUR Breasts and Plastic Surgery is available in book shops or by calling Michelle Anderson Publishing on 9826 9028. Net link:

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