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# Implant Insanity

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Regina Nelson, Ph.D.

**ISBN:** 9798844626807

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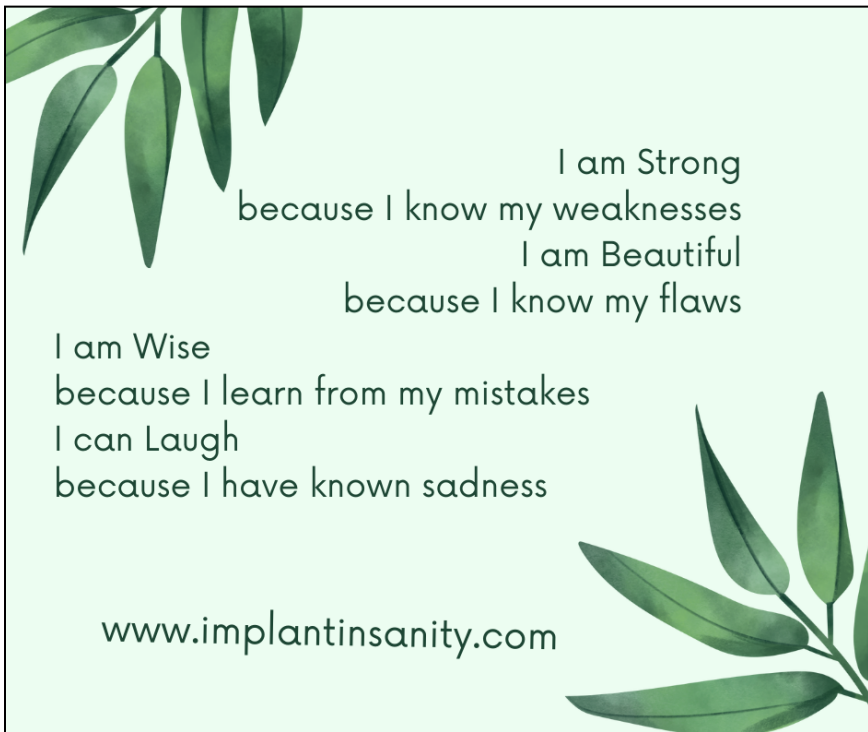
# Implant Insanity

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*Implant Insanity* is dedicated to:

My dear friends, Gretchen, Christy, April, and Maria,  
and all women in the BII/ASIA Sisterhood



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## Chapter Four: Christy's Story

By Christy Palmer

When I have written or spoken publicly about my health challenges, it has mainly been to break the stigma around cannabis use. I would be on MULTIPLE pharmaceuticals without cannabis. It has changed my life - from giving me a natural way to detoxify my body to controlling pain. Cannabis also helps stabilize my mood. However, there is more to my health journey and it is something I feel compelled to share. I believe breast implants played a role in what culminated in the equivalent of a physical immune system breakdown - it was the perfect storm.

Some people I know will be shocked to learn that I even had breast implants -- or that I had them removed. I have a petite frame. Both my natural and implanted breasts were small. The impact on my physique was minimal. The impact on my life was not.

I was a young mom who breastfed. From an early age, my breasts were a little...well...deflated. Like most women in this situation, the thought had crossed my mind to fluff up a bit, but I didn't want to be over-fluffed. I'm a health-conscious person and the idea of going under the knife unnecessarily did not appeal to me. Any fleeting thoughts were quickly dismissed.

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Then I accompanied my sister for a consultation for her breast *reduction*. (Ah...the cards life deals us, right?). While waiting, I sat flipping through a book of ‘upgrades.’ Before and after noses, tummies, chins... and dozens and dozens of breasts.

During my sister’s appointment, a conversation ensued about any improvements I might be interested in. The surgeon suggested she could give me small implants just to fill me out again. Nothing distracting. The change would be proportionate to ME. Just a better me.

She said the surgery was UNDER AN HOUR and the implants were completely **safe**. She assured me that it was the silicone implants that could rupture and were dangerous. The ones she would use were MEDICAL grade silicone with saline inside. In the unlikely event of a rupture, my body would reabsorb the saline solution.

Doctors use saline IVs to flush wounds and replenish lost fluids. I put saline solution directly in my eyes and contacts daily. I knew saline was safe for my body. It seemed reasonable that this too was safe.

*But. Don’t I have to have them redone every 10 years?* “Only if you have a problem,” she said. “I have many patients who have had their implants for 15+ years with no swap outs.”

She went so far as to say if I didn’t love them, she’d remove them for free! She also explained that removing them would only require “just a small slit.” She’d drain them, and they would “slide right out.” How wrong she was.

We did not discuss the impact this may have on my health or immune system. At the time, it never occurred to me that the F.D.A. would leave something on the market that could severely and negatively affect someone's health! They had removed other breast implants from the market. Yet, these implants were still widely available. They MUST be safe. My sister and I signed up for our

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respective surgeries. Her to get a reduction, me to get petite, **safe**, saline implants.

I have learned that saline I.V. fluid is only stable 15-30 days after opening. When stored unopened in a *cool, dry place*, the maximum duration that the solution is 'good' falls between 1-4 years after manufacturing. Bausch and Lomb, a popular manufacturer of saline eye solution, states that the acidity level of saline solution changes with time and it loses its disinfecting power. They also warn saline solutions can become contaminated with bacteria if not stored properly. And should be thrown away if the solution goes cloudy.

Fast forward nine years, I was suffering over 70 daily BII-related symptoms and had been diagnosed with not one, but three autoimmune diseases. I was sick all the time. Where before I'd been pretty resilient to viruses and colds, now I caught everything. I'd had multiple surgeries, including a full hysterectomy. I was managing my day-to-day life with cannabis use, but the symptoms from joint pain, brain fog, stomach issues, and anxiety, were still stacking up.

I was so weak; everyday tasks had become difficult. Our once clean house was a total mess. One day while folding laundry, I told my husband that instead of a towel, it felt like I was folding a weighted blanket...everything was just so much harder. I had no stamina.

My medical doctors were failing me. I was sent from one doctor to the next. Not one could figure out why I had so much pain and fatigue. I got poked, scanned, and imaged.

And I cried. A lot. I remember walking through the grocery store with tears running down my face. I did not have enough energy to care what people thought.

Sometimes the body aches were so bad I would roll on the floor or in bed, writhing in pain - trying to contort my body into some shape that would relieve at least *some* of the pain *somewhere*. My

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husband would try to massage me but often any touch was too painful. I could only stand extremely soft clothes with no pinching, itching, or binding. I felt like a bum in sweats or yoga pants literally all the time – or not bothering to get dressed at all.

I felt terrible. I laid around a LOT which is very unusual for me. A body can't hurt like this and survive, I thought. The doctors were missing something big.

I had to do something to keep my mind busy. The random symptoms made me feel like a hypochondriac. I was painfully aware of how crazy I sounded. I spent hours researching verbiage and body parts so that I could accurately describe my symptoms.

Maybe it was me? I said I had a *sharp* pain, maybe instead I should have said it was a *stitching* pain. I thought if I were more descriptive and articulate that I would say the magic word that led them to answers. I was truly afraid I would die before we pinpointed the problem. I started organizing things at home in case things got worse.

The more I researched, the more I realized I had to take my health into my own hands. Insurance wouldn't allow some of the tests that I felt I needed. So, I began self-paying for them. This took quite a financial toll. The pain and fatigue kept me from working my normal schedule. And most of the medical specialists I was seeing either didn't take insurance or weren't fully covered by my insurance provider. But I kept searching for an answer. Something that would lead me to a solution. I was desperate for help.

And then ... I took a toxicity test. My many random symptoms indicated that my body may be dealing with a toxic load. I found a national specialist that performed these types of tests. There were a lot of different detox protocols, so I began preparing myself for the

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upcoming days of specialized food, herbs, and water. I had no idea what I was about to learn.

When the test results came in, my toxicity levels were off the charts. The specialist called me himself. He said, “Don’t do anything! You are far too toxic to detoxify. I’ve never seen these numbers. You’ll overload your kidneys and liver if you try to detoxify yourself now.”

Too toxic to detoxify?? How is that possible?

(Britany Spears *Toxic* began playing on loop in my brain and lived there for many months).

I immediately ended my 25+ year career as a Colorist. It was devastating to say goodbye to the relationships I’d been nurturing for more than half my life. I was in too much pain and had no stamina for the long days. Even organic hair color was too toxic for me to expose myself to knowing how toxic my system already was.

I quit coloring my own hair, threw away hundreds of dollars of makeup, lotions, and hair products. I stopped polishing my nails. Every cleaner in our house changed. I filled my pantry with foods I didn’t recognize. I cut out dairy, wheat, soy, sugar, corn, alcohol, beer... any food that could be inflammatory. We removed all the fun from our diet and began making our meals at home. This way we could control every ingredient. Everything changed.

My husband made all the dietary changes alongside me. He inspired me to keep at it. It was HARD. Our social life suffered terribly because we no longer had the social aspect of eating out or having drinks with friends. I was too fatigued and in pain to keep up with a social life anyway.

I remember the disappointment of repeatedly buying concert or event tickets, patiently waiting, looking forward to the date, only to again feel too drained to climb the stadium seating or stand all

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evening. It also didn't help the depression and contrasting anxiety that comes with feeling ill.

Over the next year I continued implementing detoxification strategies that my body (specifically my kidneys and liver) could handle. Things like Epsom salt soaks, drinking lots of water, herbs, and infrared sauna. My symptoms improved but not dramatically. My full breasts disguised the fact that I'd lost a scary amount of weight. I was well below 100 lbs.

My husband took over everything he could so that I could focus on getting better. After 8 months of implementing constant detoxification strategies (some small like going to the infrared sauna weekly and some big like traveling to Colorado to visit the many detoxifying natural hot springs), I felt like I was ready to retest. My toxicity levels were surely normal or near normal by now, right? The strange honeycomb rashes I associated with detoxing were becoming less and less frequent. I took this as a sign that my efforts were paying off. I retested.

My toxicity results hadn't budged! I was still in the most toxic category. My specialist suggested that I was so far beyond the traditional testing scale that it would take more effort to even get myself into a testable range.

It was at this point that I heard of BII. One of my clients tactfully mentioned she had a friend affected by it. If you're reading this, Allison, you probably saved my life.

I knew immediately. I did almost no research on BII, except to find a doctor capable of performing an En bloc explant. I **knew** this was the last piece to the puzzle. My body couldn't detoxify because the toxins were quite literally laying in my chest, weakening my immune system, and sending my body into an imminent crash.

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It gave me a kind of claustrophobic panic to realize that the poison was not only self-inflicted but still sitting inside my body. BP leeches invisibly into our water from plastic bottles ... What does silicone do when held tightly and warmly within the body for years on end? I knew I had to get them out. IMMEDIATELY.

I shared this information with my husband. Without pause he said “schedule it” -- No thought or discussion to the additional thousands of dollars that would have to come out of pocket. We didn’t discuss how my breasts might look afterwards. We didn’t care. It was literally life and death and we both knew it. My light was going out. I could feel it. And if you looked in my eyes, you could see it.

I joined the Facebook group, *Breast Implant Healing by Nicole*. I read just enough firsthand stories to locate an explant micro-surgeon in my city. The women’s brave stories and encouragement gave me strength. I took a screenshot of an image posted by a woman I didn’t even know. It showed her face before and after explant surgery. She looked 20 years younger just days after her implant removal. She LOOKED like she felt healthier. I looked at this picture daily; it became my screen saver. It gave me hope that I might start to feel better after the removal.

I made the consultation appointment and while I waited, I tried not to think about the venomous poison sacks in my body. When I met with the surgeon, he asked why I was there. I said, “I need you to get these toxic sacks of shit out of my body as soon as you can... please...” My eyes filled with tears.

There was not a before and after picture book for me to thumb through. It was just me begging for help.

We were still in pandemic mode, so I prayed my explant surgery wouldn’t be rescheduled. I continued any detoxing I could and tried



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to build my weakened system up. Implementing detox protocols over the previous months helped my body to withstand the surgery. But it was hard on me. The removal surgery was far more than just making a small slit and sliding the implants out as the surgeon who implanted them suggested.

I needed an En bloc - which literally translates to “all together” or “as a whole”. It is a method of surgery that removes the breast implant with all the scar tissue encapsulated around it, all together, without opening the capsule. The surgeon basically filets your breast open and cuts the implant out with the scar tissue attached. It is not simple. Removing the implant this way is necessary to remove the toxic build up that has formed in the scar tissue.

My explant doctor performed a very intense 3-hour En bloc surgery that left me with perky breasts and 14 inches of deep scarring underneath. Going into surgery, I wondered how many **implant** surgeries he would perform that day. I also prayed he would get my implants **out** without any of the 10-year-old fluid leaking into my body.

Thankfully my implants were removed intact because they had a cloudy, mold soup swimming inside them. One had also been placed backwards.

The pain after surgery was BAD. I had shooting nerve pain and my skin felt tight and burnt. I am thankful to the many women who were vulnerable and shared their photos with me. It helped to know what to expect throughout the surgery and healing. Initially the massive incisions took up my entire chest cavity. I was bruised and misshapen. Franken-boobs, I thought.

Yet, only one day after surgery my eyes looked brighter and clearer. Within a week my face had reshaped itself. The reduction in inflammation was visible. My nose was smaller, my cheekbones

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more defined. My fingers looked slender instead of plump. I don't know how to describe it other than, I felt as if oxygen was making its way to my extremities for the first time in years.

In the Facebook group, I'd made a friend, Amber, that explanted just a few weeks after me with the same doctor. We joked that we were "breast friends" and messaged almost daily. Was any fluffing going to happen? Were the incisions going to stay hard like a permanent underwire? My breasts initially looked square like a Ken doll! We were both glad for the explant and the support we found in each other. Our conversation changed in the months after explant:

"I think my brain fog is better!"

"Do you have trapped air? The first 2 days (after explant) I had pains in my chest and could hardly breathe. I thought they broke a rib!"

"I have a bizarre rash all over my chest"

"I went and looked for some scar stuff. The surgeon recommended a product - which is crazy because it has silicone gel in it! I just took out my implants! Why would I use silicone scar strips?"

"My joint pain was worse before; it doesn't hurt until evening now."

"I've had almost no joint pain or IC pain since...wouldn't that be crazy if it was just gone?! Fingers crossed for both of us!"

Amber and I compared ways we could detox like warm lemon water and herbs, infrared sauna, and oil pulling. We both had multiple other surgeries but agreed this was the hardest recovery we'd experienced.

We also talked about the weird ways our bodies were responding. Some days were more symptomatic than others. I had read about a girl who, after explant, had *tiny silicone pebbles* come out of her ear.

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This sounded ludicrous to me ... until I began having random coughs here and there that produced a small, strange, rubbery substance.

On multiple occasions I've coughed up a tiny, dense, clear mucus ball. So thick and dense and rubbery, it was not just mucus. My implants had been intact at explant, but this actually looked and felt like silicone. As if you rolled up the sticky strip that holds a credit card to the letter it came with and rolled it into a ball with your fingers.

My naturopath explained that mucus is one of the body's ways of expelling toxins. Microscopic silicone particles had leached into my body, now my body was trying to rid itself of these small particles. This has continued sporadically but seems to be happening with less frequency.

Eventually, our symptoms, scars, boob shapes, and attitudes improved. We began talking more about where we could order cute bralettes during the pandemic, rather than our symptoms.

"I'm back in the itty-bitty titty committee and looking just fine to me!"

"I need to start working out. My boobs are perkier than the rest of me!"

Two years after removal, I do still have autoimmune flare ups, but I'm not *living* in one every.single.day. They are easier to tolerate. My symptoms have dropped from around 70 to less than 25. I still have a lot of healing to do. At least now my body can work with me instead of against me.

I'm grateful someone had the courage to speak up. I'm thankful for the vulnerability of the women who shared their stories and photos. I add my story to theirs hoping the weight of MANY voices makes an impact.

I can't say it better than Loretta Lynn did in 1999:

**“You women out there who have breast implants. They’re dangerous. Jerk them out.”** Or better yet, don’t get them in the first place.



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Do not allow people to dim your shine because they are blinded. Tell them to put some sunglasses on.

Lady Gaga