

ConsumerReports[®]Health

What's fair?

Fair healthcare pricing from Healthcare Blue Book

Healthcare Blue Book is a free consumer guide to help you determine fair prices in your area for healthcare services

Breast augmentation

Cosmetic surgery to electively increase breast size with an implant (CPT code 19325)

Fair price:

Includes: Physician fee, facility fee, anesthesia fee, saline implants, followup visits

National fair price: **\$ 5,815**

National range: **\$3,200 – 10,460**

Local fair prices:

Boston, Massachusetts 02102 **\$6,357**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202 **\$5,584**

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402 **\$5,618**

Jacksonville, Florida 32202 **\$5,755**

Los Angeles, California 90006 **\$6,127**

Houston, Texas 77010 **\$5,933**

New York, NY 10003 **\$6,584**

Check the fair price in your region at healthcarebluebook.com

Details:

How were these prices calculated and what are they based on?

This is Healthcare Blue Book's recommended price for a breast augmentation.

Breast augmentation is an elective cosmetic surgery and is therefore not covered by most health insurance. The Blue Book fair price recommendation is based on the typical payment amount that providers accept from cash paying patients.

Patients should be able to find providers in their area that accept prices at or below the Blue Book fair price, although many providers may charge more.

How should consumers use this information?

You can use the Blue Book fair price as a guide to help you compare prices when you shop for care and to make sure that you receive treatment at a fair price.

Because breast augmentation is typically paid for by the patient, patients should call several cosmetic surgery practices and ask about price. Patients can search for cosmetic surgeons at the American Medical Association website (www.ama-assn.org) or the American Association of Plastic Surgeons (www.plasticsurgery.org)

Different providers often charge different prices. Prices for breast augmentation may range from \$3,200 to over \$8,500 in many areas. We recommend that patients call several providers to find one that charges a fair price.

Alternatively, patients may ask if a provider accepts the Blue Book fair price. The provider may accept the fair price amount or offer some discount from the original price.

Key points to consider when shopping for breast augmentation.

- The Blue Book fair price for breast augmentation includes the cost of standard saline implants. Patients may choose to use silicone implants, which can add as much as \$700-\$1,500 to the price of the procedure.
- Prices for this service frequently vary by over 200% in many locations. Patients should call several providers to ask about the price before you have your procedure.
- Make sure to ask what is included in the price. Specifically, ask if the price estimate includes the physician fee, facility fee, anesthesia, cost of implants and one or more followup visits.
- Ask about other typical costs you may have to pay, such as post-operative medications.

Breast augmentation does not qualify as a reimbursable expense for your Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Account (HRA).

What's fair? Breast augmentation

Is breast augmentation covered by health insurance plans?

No. Breast augmentation is considered an elective cosmetic procedure and is not covered by most health insurance policies.

Is breast augmentation typically covered by Medicare or Medicaid plans?

No. Elective cosmetic breast augmentation is not covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

What kind of out-of-pocket costs should I expect to pay?

Patients should expect to pay 100% of the cost out of pocket.

Patients may want to ask their provider if they can have an additional discount for paying the full bill at the time of treatment. If you cannot pay the full cost of the procedure at the time of treatment, some cosmetic surgery practices offer financing and payment plans.

Do the costs for this service vary depending on which provider I use?

The price variation in most locations varies by 200% or more depending on where you get your care.

Since this procedure is paid directly by the patient, most provider practices can be flexible in terms of offering discounts. If you are not satisfied with a provider's price, you can consider other providers that may offer you a more reasonable price.

What other trends or variations in cost should I be aware of?

There may be additional costs, such as pre-operative lab tests, imaging and post-operative medications (antibiotics, ointment or pain medications) that the patient may have to pay out of pocket.

What other tips can help me ensure I get the best price?

- If the quoted price is not initially in the range of the fair price, don't be afraid to ask for a discount.
- Always be courteous and respectful when asking about price or when interacting with office staff.
- If you are offered a discount based on payment at the time of treatment, make sure to pay your bill promptly.

Qualifications

Cosmetic surgeons should be board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgeons.

Alternatives

Some patients would like to change the appearance of their breasts but also have concerns with the potential long term complications from implants.

One alternative to consider is a breast lift. A breast lift procedure does not require the use of implants.

Other concerns

Like any invasive surgery, breast augmentation has its own risks, including infection, complication and scarring. Patients may also feel dissatisfied with the aesthetic results, which may lead to additional surgery.

In addition, breast implants may need to be removed or replaced in 10-15 years. Breast implants may also leak and need to be replaced.

Patients should discuss their expectations, the surgical risks and the long term clinical and financial implications with their doctor before electing to have this procedure.

The pricing and benefits information reflected in this report is based upon the common pricing and practices found in most markets and may not reflect the specific pricing or health benefits available to you. Some providers charge amounts well in excess of the Blue Book fair price. Some insurance plans cover services differently. If possible, you should check with your medical provider and health insurance company to confirm pricing and benefit coverage for services before you get care. In addition, you will want to check on your providers' quality information.

Consumer Reports Health "What's Fair?" reports should not be viewed as a substitute for a consultation with a medical or health professional.

This report is intended solely for consumers' personal, noncommercial use and may not be altered or modified in any way or used in advertising, for promotion, or for any other commercial purpose. Special permission is granted to organizations participating in the Consumer Reports consumer health communication program to disseminate free copies of this report in print or digital (PDF) formats to individual members and employees. Learn more at ConsumerHealthChoices.org or send an e-mail to HealthImpact@cr.consumer.org.

Cost data and content are used under license from Healthcare Blue Book. Data current as of March 2012.

Published by Consumer Reports © 2012 Consumers Union of U.S., Inc., 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057.