

# What is BIA-ALCL?

Symptoms and how to check your breasts if you have concerns about your implants

Information for Patients

**Leigh Day**

# What is BIA-ALCL and how does it occur?

Breast Implant Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL) is a rare type of lymphoma that can develop primarily around breast implants. BIA-ALCL is rare, but it is important, if you have textured breast implants, that you know about it.

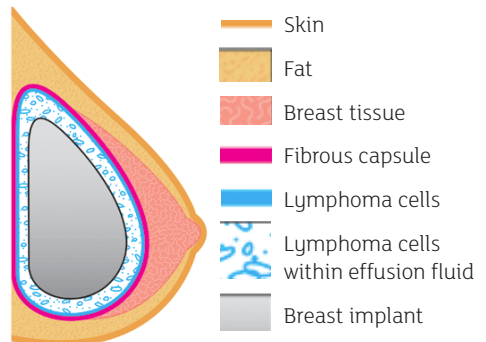
BIA-ALCL occurs in patients who have textured breast implants filled with either silicone or saline implants. To date, there are no confirmed BIA-ALCL cases which involve only smooth implants. The UK regulator the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) is currently investigating the causes of BIA-ALCL and confirms that research is yet to provide a definitive answer as to how BIA-ALCL develops, although there are several competing theories including that the surface texturing on implants may play a role in how some patients react to having an implant in place. Research is ongoing in the UK and worldwide to better understand how BIA-ALCL develops.

Onset of BIA-ALCL has been reported to range between 2 and 28 years after breast implantation, most commonly occurring between 7 and 10 years post implantation.

## Common symptoms

Whilst all women should regularly check their breasts as detailed below, women with implants should also pay extra attention to the following symptoms:

- a 'late' seroma (a collection of fluid occurring at least a year following surgery) around the breast implant.
- a lump next to an implant, or within the fibrous tissue, which develops around the implant (referred to as the capsule)
- a lump in the breast or armpit
- overlying skin rash
- hardening of the breast.



If you are concerned about any changes in your breast, refer directly to your GP.

### Yellow card

If you develop any issue with a breast implant please report it through the MHRA Yellow Card Scheme: <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

### Breast checking

All women should regularly check their breasts as recommended by the NHS breast screening programme. The programme has produced a 5-point plan for being breast aware:

- know what's normal for you
- look at your breasts and feel them
- know what changes to look for
- report any changes without delay
- attend routine screening if you're 50 or over

Look at your breasts and feel each breast and armpit, and up to your collarbone. You may find it easiest to do this in the shower or bath, by running a soapy hand over each breast and up under each armpit. You can also look at your breasts in the mirror. Look with your arms by your side and also with them raised.

### Breast changes to look out for

See your GP if you notice any of the following changes:

- a change in the size, outline or shape of your breast

- a change in the look or feel of your skin, such as puckering or dimpling
- a new lump, thickening or bumpy area in one breast or armpit that is different from the same area on the other side
- nipple discharge
- bleeding from your nipple
- a moist, red area on your nipple that doesn't heal easily
- any change in nipple position, such as your nipple being pulled in or pointing differently
- a rash on or around your nipple
- any discomfort or pain in one breast, particularly if it's a new pain and doesn't go away

Breast changes can happen for many reasons, and most of them aren't serious- if you have any concerns, please see your GP.

### Act on BIA-ALCL

For those women who are diagnosed with BIA-ALCL, Leigh Day want to ensure that no matter where they are in the UK, they are diagnosed as early as possible and receive optimal treatment, monitoring and management. In order to achieve that goal we are calling upon the healthcare sector to act on BIA-ALCL. In order to achieve that goal we are calling upon the healthcare sector to act on BIA-ALCL and we have produced a leaflet on BIA-ALCL for healthcare professionals to help raise further awareness of the illness.

[#ActOnBIAALCL](#)



### **Zahra Nanji | Associate Solicitor**

Zahra is leading the team representing women who have had a diagnosis of Breast Implant Associated-Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL) as a result of having textured breast implants for cosmetic or reconstructive purposes. She has commented extensively on BIA-ALCL and is campaigning for stronger action to be taken in relation to textured implants, including improvements in the diagnosis, treatment and management of BIA-ALCL in the UK. She is passionate about advocating more widely for consumer and patient rights and safety.

✉ [znanji@leighday.co.uk](mailto:znanji@leighday.co.uk)

# Leigh Day

## Justice for all

Leigh Day is a specialist law firm with some of the country's leading personal injury, product liability, clinical negligence, employment and discrimination, international and human rights teams.

Unlike other law firms, we act exclusively for claimants who have been injured or treated unlawfully by others.

### **Contact us for a free, no obligation and confidential discussion**

☎ +44(0)20 7650 1200

✉ [BIA-ALCL@leighday.co.uk](mailto:BIA-ALCL@leighday.co.uk)

🖱 [leighday.co.uk/AllerganBreastImplantClaim](http://leighday.co.uk/AllerganBreastImplantClaim)

🐦 [@LeighDay\\_Law](https://twitter.com/LeighDay_Law) | [#ActOnBIAALCL](https://twitter.com/LeighDay_Law)

**Published by Leigh Day © April 2020**

Reproduction of this Leigh Day leaflet in whole or part without permission from Leigh Day is strictly prohibited.