

Australian bid to 'regrow' breasts after cancer surgery

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Australian scientists said Thursday they were to trial a revolutionary treatment which would allow women to regrow their breasts after cancer surgery.

Doctors from Melbourne's Bernard O'Brien Institute of [Microsurgery](#) said they had developed an implantable device that uses a woman's own fat cells to grow back breasts following a mastectomy.

"There is a dollop of fat that is put inside a device, a chamber, fed with the [blood supply](#) and then this dollop of fat will grow into the space and essentially feel normal to the patient," said lead researcher Phillip Marzella.

Resembling a perforated brassiere cup, Marzella said the chamber would eventually fill with fat as the initial deposit expands because "nature abhors a vacuum".

Initial participants would have to undergo a second operation to remove the chamber, but he said a biodegradable version that would dissolve within weeks was planned.

"In terms of the breast certainly I think this is the first time it has been done in the world using this technology," Marzella told AFP.

"Certainly there's work that has been done using [stem cells](#) but this is a completely different device that uses the patient's own blood supply."

Trials on pigs had proved "very successful" and the question was whether the human body could grow fat in the breast area, he said.

The hospital, which received a three million dollar (2.8 million US) government research grant, had been given human ethics clearance and the first human trials will begin early next year, he added.

Breast cancer is the most common form of the disease among women worldwide and the leading cause of female cancer fatalities.

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