

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

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Q. I know that those breast enhancement pills might not really work. What about hormone pills or estrogen pills? Do they have any bad side effects or will they cause long term damage?

A. Your hunch is right – breast enhancement pills do not work, and that goes for the cream and powder varieties as well. Despite their heavy rotation as TV advertisements with glowing testimonials by (surprise!) paid actors, these herbal formulas have shown no effectiveness in enhancing a woman’s bust, only their marketers’ bottom line.

If you read the ingredients for these products you may begin to feel like you are on inventory duty at a greenhouse. You’ll find extracts of hops, wild yam, saw palmetto, dong quai, chaste-tree berry, kava, fennel and black cohosh among others. On a good day these herbal extracts provide no increase in breast size and on a bad day a few may actually harm your body. To date, kava has been associated with liver toxicity and dong quai may increase bleeding when combined with anticoagulants (blood thinners).

Your mention of hormone or estrogen pills requires some clarification. If you are referring to birth control pills (which contain estrogen and progesterone), some women will experience a temporary increase in breast size while they are on the pill. The same can be said for women who take estrogen replacement therapy (ERT or HRT) during menopause, though neither the pill nor ERT are prescribed for this reason.

Although the barrage of media messages tells us otherwise, breasts are not the defining feature of a woman’s sexuality. And if you think that men only want women with large breasts, think again – polls have consistently shown that men are attracted to a woman’s face far more than her bust, and a majority of them prefer women with small breasts. So revel in your uniqueness, it is perhaps the greatest asset of them all.

Source: “Bust Enhancing” Herbal Products, Adriane Fugh-Berman, MD

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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