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# Sad and saggy

WOMEN'S WORLD

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## **A look at why breasts sag, why some sag more than others, and what you can do about it.**

ONE of the biggest fears faced by women is sagging breasts, particularly in our modern culture where women's breasts have become so revered as symbols of sexuality.

Just look at the lengths that women will go to, just to make their breasts bigger, rounder, perkier or even smaller!

Sagging of breasts is a natural, inevitable process. Your breasts are not immune to the pull of gravity, no matter how hard you wish it to be.

So what is the purpose of this article? It's aimed at helping you understand why breasts sag, why some women's breasts sag more than others and what you can do about it.

### **What makes them droop?**

Your breasts are made up of ligaments and connective tissues, but they have no muscles in them. When the force of gravity acts on the breasts, these ligaments, connective tissues and the skin can stretch, causing sagging.

Sagginess is more obvious in bigger breasts, since there is more mass being pulled down by gravity.

In some cases, sagging is very notable, particularly in women who have just stopped breastfeeding, who do not breastfeed after pregnancy or who are going through menopause.

This is due to a process called breast involution, where the milk-making system inside the breast shrinks because it is not needed anymore.

When the tissues inside the breast shrink, and the skin surrounding it doesn't, the breast can look "empty" and saggy. Over time, some fat is deposited back to the breast, so it will look somewhat fuller, but sagging usually remains.

Some women find that their breasts are saggy after they lose weight. This is because some of the weight loss comes from the fat in the breasts, while the skin of the breasts and the ligaments inside do not retract accordingly. What you get then, is an “empty-looking” breast that sags.

### **When do they start sagging?**

When you start sagging, and how much you sag, depends on the elasticity of your skin and your ligaments (as determined by your genes and diet), and also on normal ageing processes.

For most women, their breasts will begin to sag markedly after menopause, regardless of whether they have been pregnant. Overweight women may sag earlier, as their breasts contain extra fat tissues that are heavier.

### **What’s actually wrong with it?**

If saggy breasts are actually a natural phenomenon, then why are we so repulsed? We have been “brainwashed” by fashion magazines and celebrity-watching into believing that the image of perky breasts and a deep cleavage are the ideal.

In fact, these images have likely been fixed or modified with airbrushing or computer graphic techniques. They are far from the “typical” breast, exemplified by millions of women around the world.

### **A word on bras**

A common myth among women is that one’s breasts sag because she does not wear a bra regularly.

This is only partly true – bras do stop your breasts from sagging, but only while you’re wearing them, of course! Once you remove the bra, the force of gravity will still pull your breasts down.

As the breast itself is not made of muscle, there is no way that one can keep it “toned”, either by wearing bras or through exercise.

In fact, there is some research to show that breasts in bras actually sag more when the bra is taken off, because the ligaments that support the breasts atrophy (become thinner and weaker) as they are not being utilised to support the weight of the breasts.

Should you take this to mean that bras are bad? Of course not. In our culture, going bra-less in public is seen as taboo and few women would be comfortable with such a practice. However, perhaps you could consider not wearing a bra while in the privacy of your own home, or to bed at night.

It is very important that you wear a good sports bra when you're exercising. Jogging, in particular, can cause breasts to bounce enough to stretch the ligaments inside, which will cause even more sagging.

### **Dealing with it**

Some believe that eating nutritious foods can help improve the elasticity of the skin, and hence prevent droopiness. While this is not proven, eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet with lots of vitamins and minerals will give you many other benefits, both on and below the surface of the skin!

At the end of the day, you'll just have to accept your breasts, saggy as they are! Do not obsess about how unattractive they look – you may be surprised to find that men actually do not find it a turn-off!

If your partner does feel that way, try to educate him. He should love you for your whole self, not just some of your physical attributes, which are subject to the pressures of time and age. Furthermore, there are many other aspects to your physique and personality that may be far more attractive.

We can't all be young, attractive teenagers. But we can appreciate and enjoy what we have, and learn to make the best of it.

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