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BRITISH BREASTS REALLY ARE A PAIN IN THE BACK

- New consumer research reveals it really is what's underneath that counts -

One thing that certainly won't be on women's Christmas wish list this year is bigger breasts.

Contrary to popular belief, figures released today by figleaves.com and The British Chiropractic Association have revealed that **a quarter of UK women would actually like to make their breasts smaller**.

The reason why? Breasts are a pain in the back for the nation. 70% of women surveyed admitted to having had suffered from back pain at some point in their lives and nearly half (47%) claim their breast size affects their posture.

According to the research, the average British bra size currently measures in at a substantial 34DD, so support should be the key priority when buying a bra. But women continue to place fashion over well being with 83% admitting that the appearance of a bra is a key factor when purchasing one whilst a mere 1% consider how supportive a bra is to be an important variable.

Despite the long term consequences of wearing the wrong size bra, it seems the female British public are too red in the face to get professionally measured, with nearly half (44%) of women who have yet to be measured admitting that embarrassment is the main factor preventing them from doing it, whilst a quarter (25%) claim they just don't have enough time. figleaves.com offers the perfect antidote with their online Fitting Room complete with expert tips and advice. Tell-tale signs to look out for are listed so that women can determine whether they are wearing the right size in the comfort of their own homes.

The survey goes on to reveal that nearly a fifth (16%) of British women have never been professionally measured for a bra and for those that have, 77% found they had been wearing completely the wrong size.

Not only does wearing the wrong size bra affect how you look, it can have a detrimental effect on your posture. The British Chiropractic Association and figleaves.com have teamed up to educate women on the importance of wearing the correct bra size.

Tim Hutchful from the British Chiropractic Association comments: “It really is quite shocking how many women still place how a bra looks over how much support it gives. Bras are like suspension bridges, you need a well engineered bra so your shoulders don’t take all of the strain and end up doing all of the work, spreading the load is important. Bras that don’t fit will affect the shoulders and chest and will almost certainly cause back pain as you get older.”

He continues: “Back pain continues to rise in Britain and we want to educate people on the simple, everyday lifestyle changes people can make to prevent problems later in life. It is so important to make sure a bra gives you enough support as possible. Wearing the wrong size bra can lead to a number of problems including back pain, tingling in the arms, restricted breathing, abrasions, breast pain and poor posture.”

Kate Horrell, figleaves.com’s fitting expert recommends looking closely in the mirror at your bra and discloses the tell-tale signs that indicate you are wearing the wrong size:

- The underband is riding up:
  Lift up your arms to see if the underband is tight enough. Check that the underwire is still fitting on the body. If you are still unsure, here’s how to judge: the underband should fit firmly against the body so that it does not slide around or move away from the chest as you go about your daily activities.

- The shoulder straps are digging in:
  The underband of a bra provides the majority (80 per cent) of support for the breasts, with the straps providing just 20 per cent. If the bra straps are digging in it could be because the underband is too loose and you are over adjusting the straps to feel supported. When you do this the straps pull the bra up at the back, which is another tell-tale sign that the band is too loose – so in this case we recommend that you try a smaller band size. Alternatively, you may just need to loosen the straps.

- The centre fold is lifting away from the body:
  The centre front should lie flat against the body. If it doesn’t, this could be a sign that the cups are too small, causing the breasts to push the centre front away.

- The back band is over stretched:
  Look at your back straps: they should either be parallel to each other, or converge in a slight V-shape at the back. If they are too far apart at the back (an upside down V), it could mean that your bra band is too small and overstretching. (It is possible, however, that this is simply the design of the bra, so look for other clues such as the back band digging in uncomfortably.)

As the festive party season closes in, the message out there to all women is make sure you start your party outfit shopping with the right bra and everything else will soon take shape.

For more information call the BCA on 0118 950 5950 or visit www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk

Ends

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Notes to Editors

* Research carried out by Figleaves in October 2008 of 1,300 respondents

Chiropractic is a primary health-care profession that specialises in the diagnosis, treatment and overall management of conditions that are due to problems with the joints, ligaments, tendons and nerves of the body, particularly those of the spine.

*The **BCA** represents well over 50% of UK chiropractors. Chiropractic is a statutorily regulated healthcare profession regulated by the General Chiropractic Council. Members of the BCA must abide by the GCC's Code of Conduct and Standard of Proficiency. The association only accepts graduates who have gone through a minimum four-year full-time internationally accredited degree course at an internationally recognised college of chiropractic education. Chiropractic care offers hands on pain management and focuses on muscles, joints and nerves. Chiropractic is suitable for all ages and can help with a wide range of aches and pains from head to toe. Chiropractors use their hands to 'adjust' or 'manipulate' the spine and joints where signs of restriction in movement are found and can also involve working on muscles. This restores normal function to the affected muscles, joints and nerves allowing the body to then get on with the job of healing itself.*