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# Health & Fitness

## Can a simple pill really give you a better figure?

Actress Sally Farmiloe was so desperate for a non-surgical body 'lift' that she embarked on a course of a bizarre nutritional supplement

**I**T'S one of those health supplements that induce incredulous cackles when mentioned — a nutritional pill, tested on cows, which its makers claim will firm your saggy bits and give you a better bust. With even more people looking for a little extra help to perfect their figure — and being put off by the dangers and expense of going under the knife — it could be the perfect answer. But how effective is it really?

To be honest, when I first heard about this new supplement, I was very sceptical. Firstly, it contains hops, which are not something I had associate with healthy skin, and I learned it was once used to help make cows' udders grow. Not terribly enticing.

But, after spending 20 years desperately trying to hold back the sands of time, I thought it might be worth a go. If it works on cows' udders, why not for me too? I've tried just about everything to improve my chest — even surgery — and no method has had the desired effect.

So, when I was offered a free trial course of Erdic, this plant-based supplement that claims to enlarge breast cup size, firm and perk up the décolleté, I jumped at the chance. Okay, I turned 50 last year, but like any woman, I still want to look my best whenever I set foot outside my home in West Kensington. And I had nothing to lose as, until that point, I had pretty much resigned myself to letting nature take its southerly course.

At least this method was non-invasive. I had breast implants when I started modelling at 19 and they were disastrous. At that time I was a '34A' and needed to have fuller, sexier breasts to help get ahead in my career. That was 30 years ago and I had the original silicone implants which, as I later discovered, caused problems. After only months, I found that both breasts felt uncomfortable and solid scar tissue had hardened around the implants. This is called encapsulation.

**F**OR as long as I could stand it, I persevered. But although I liked the idea of having bigger boobs, I was tiny — only seven-and-a-half stone — and I started thinking that they looked unnaturally large. I also didn't like the fact that my cleavage never looked good because the breasts were pushed together. I hated my boobs staying rigidly upright when I was lying on my back. I had the implants taken out when I was 24, having had the first pair replaced but they too, hardened and somehow never seemed right for my body.

I didn't bother with anything after that except for padded bras, but when I reached 40, I started finding lumps in my breasts. I became hysterical and immediately went to see a breast-cancer specialist. He reassured me that the lumps were not malignant, they were actually bits of silicone that had leaked and formed solid deposits, and I had them all



Greatly impressed: Sally Farmiloe

### What the sceptic says

AS far as I am aware, there is only one scientific study on the potential role of hops and other phytoestrogen foods on breast size. This states that results were inconclusive — especially when one realises that the laboratory mice were given doses equivalent to 250 times more than is considered safe for women.

However, there does seem to be some anecdotal evidence from the Erdic trial that this supplement may have a mildly beneficial effect. The cows' udder result is also interesting and rather amusing. It is true that breast tissue has increased receptors that sense hormone levels and swell in response to oestrogen levels — such as in pregnancy or when on the Pill — but the intake of the supplement would certainly have to be continued if the breast size was to be maintained.

These supplements contain grains which are sources of gluten and are thus not suitable for anyone on a gluten-free diet. They also contain the amino acid L-ornithine which can stimulate the release of human-growth hormone and help reduce body fat and increase muscle mass, but this is not recommended for people with schizophrenia.

My opinion is that £450 is a lot of money to pay for a course of tablets; taking 10 a day would certainly make you rattle. And then, you would have to keep on taking them to keep the effect going, involving more expense.

The money may be better spent improving your diet — phytoestrogens are found in some foods including soya products, celery and raspberries — so presumably if one ate large enough amounts of them the effect would be the same without the high cost.

Ian Marber, nutritionist

removed. But it was very frightening to know that these lumps had been caused by leakage.

Then, after my daughter Jade was born 11 years ago, I caught sight of myself in a mirror in a white, flimsy dress, wearing no bra. I was appalled by my appearance. My breasts were so droopy I decided to become a respectable mum and wear support at all times.

In despair at my breasts' sagging I then tried outplants. They were hopeless. They looked like chicken fillets, and I only wore them a few times as I decided they were a most peculiar shape. Several months later, when I was clearing out my underwear drawer, I found one of them had a huge hole in the nipple area, as if a giant plastic-eating moth had been in there.

Then I tried lots of bust-firming creams which tingled encouragingly, but did nothing else. Then last year, just before my partner Jeremy Neville and I got married, I found out about this new supplement, called Erdic. I looked into what these pills contained very carefully and was interested that the ingredients were totally natural — the formula is based on extracts of hops, buckwheat, fennel, rye, malt and barley. These ingredients contain plant hormones, and phytoestrogens, which apparently stimulate the glandular tissue in the

Continued on next page