**Breast Cancer Reconstruction Surgery**

**What is Breast Cancer Reconstruction Surgery?**
- In order to surgically treat breast cancer or to prevent cancer if you have a high risk of getting breast cancer, your surgeon may recommend a mastectomy, which is the removal of your breast.
- Breast reconstruction is surgery to rebuild your breast after a mastectomy.

**Timing of Breast Reconstruction Surgery**
- For some people, breast reconstruction can be done at the same time as your mastectomy. This is called immediate reconstruction. Breast reconstruction can also be done at a later time. This is called delayed reconstruction.
- Immediate reconstruction is not always possible. Here are some reasons why immediate reconstruction may not work for you:
  - You have inflammatory breast cancer
  - Cancer is found in your lymph nodes
  - You may choose to delay breast reconstruction surgery until fully recovered from mastectomy or other personal issues
  - You need radiation treatment quickly after your mastectomy surgery
- If you have radiation to the breast you may need to wait at least 1 year after your breast is removed before having delayed breast reconstruction. This may reduce your risk of serious problems after surgery.

**What is used to rebuild the breast?**

1. **Saline or silicone implants**
   - There are a lot of factors involved in choosing an implant. You may need a temporary saline filled tissue expander first that is filled over time and then replaced with a permanent implant at a second stage. You might be able to have a permanent implant right away. Implants come in many shapes and sizes.

2. **Your own body tissue**
   - Tissue from your body (autologous tissue) is taken from your stomach, back, thighs or buttock to rebuild your breast.

3. **Implants and body tissue**
   - Implants and/or body tissue may be used for either immediate or delayed reconstruction.
   - In some cases, it may be possible to keep your breast skin (skin-sparing mastectomy), or your skin, nipple and areola (nipple-sparing mastectomy) if you are having immediate reconstruction, but this should be discussed further with your surgeon.

**Is follow-up required?**
You need to follow-up with your health care team and have regular check-ups with a physical examination of your chest wall and breasts.
- You may need imaging if you have changes or unusual symptoms in your reconstructed breast, such as lumps or skin changes.

**Can everyone have breast reconstruction surgery?**
- Breast reconstruction may not be possible for everyone. For example, breast reconstruction is not recommended if you are a smoker, have a medical condition such as obesity or diabetes, or your cancer is at an advanced stage.
- These things can put you at a greater risk of serious problems after surgery.
- These factors, as well as your surgeon’s preference and your preference may also affect the type of reconstruction that is best for you.

**Who should I talk to about breast reconstruction surgery options?**
- Your health care team can give you the best information about your breast reconstruction options based on your personal medical situation.
- It is important that you understand and feel comfortable with your options for breast reconstruction. If you have concerns of questions, talk to a member of your health care team.

**Additional Resources:**