



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.

- Talk to your health care team about the best timing for your breast reconstruction.

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 or questions, talk to a member of your health care team.

Additional Resources:

- Canadian Cancer Society: <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/breast/supportive-care/>
- Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation: <http://www.breast-day.com/breast-reconstruction/>