

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Breast Cancer Surgery

Patient Information about Breast Cancer

<http://www.oncologychannel.com/patient-information-breast-cancer/surgery.shtml>

Surgery combined with other treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation, is the most common treatment for breast cancer. The type of surgery that is performed depends on a number of factors, including the stage of the disease. Types of surgical procedures used to treat breast cancer include lumpectomy and mastectomy (e.g., modified radical mastectomy, simple [total] mastectomy, radical mastectomy, partial mastectomy).

Following breast cancer surgery, some women choose to have breast reconstructive surgery. It is important to discuss this availability of this option with your physician while developing your overall treatment plan.

Questions to Ask about Breast Cancer Surgery

- Are you board-certified?
- Do you specialize in breast cancer surgery?
- What type of surgical procedure will be performed to treat my breast cancer? Why do you recommend this type of surgery?
- About how many times have you performed this procedure?
- Do you recommend that I have an axillary lymph node dissection? Why or why not?
- What are the benefits and risks associated with axillary node dissection?
- Will I have breast reconstruction surgery following the procedure? If so, when will this surgery take place?
- What tests will I need prior to surgery?
- How should I prepare for the procedure?
- What type of anesthesia will be used? How long will the procedure take?
- Might I require a blood transfusion during surgery?
- What will be the course of action if you discover during surgery that my cancer is more extensive than previously thought?

- What types of complications may develop during surgery?
 - Will I be admitted to the hospital after surgery? If so, how long will I be in the hospital?
 - What can I expect following the procedure? How will my pain be managed?
 - Will I need to have a surgical drain? How do I care for this drain and when will it be removed?
 - How will my breasts look and feel after surgery? Can I expect normal sensation to return?
 - What will my scar look like?
 - Who should I contact if I have questions or experience complications after the procedure?
Telephone number to call:
 - When can I resume normal daily activities following surgery?
 - How often will my condition be monitored after surgery to treat breast cancer?
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Questions to Ask about Breast Reconstructive Surgery

- Are you board-certified?
- Do you specialize in breast reconstructive surgery?
- About how many of these procedures have you performed? How many do you perform each year?
- Am I a good candidate for breast reconstruction? Why or why not?
- What is the cost of breast reconstruction surgery? Is the procedure covered by insurance?
- What type of breast reconstruction do you recommend?

- What are the benefits and limitations associated with this procedure?
- When will breast reconstruction surgery be performed in relation to breast cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy?
- What are tissue expanders? Will they be used? Why or why not?
- Do you recommend saline or silicone implants? Why do you recommend this type?
- What size implants do you recommend?
- Will tissue from another part of my body be used in my breast reconstruction?
- Will nipple reconstruction be performed?
- How should I prepare for breast reconstructive surgery?
- How long will the procedure take?
- What type of anesthesia will be used during reconstructive surgery?
- Might I require a blood transfusion during the procedure?
- What types of complications can occur during breast reconstructive surgery?
- Will I be admitted to the hospital after surgery? If so, how long will I be in the hospital?
- What can I expect immediately following the procedure? How will my pain be managed?
- Will I need to have a surgical drain? How do I care for this drain and when will it be removed?
- Who should I contact if I have questions or experience complications after the procedure?
Telephone number to call:
- How will my breasts look and feel after reconstructive surgery?
- What type of results can I expect? What will my scar look like?

- When can I resume normal daily activities following reconstructive surgery?
 - When should I be seen for a follow-up appointment?
Next appointment: Date: Time:
 - Might I require additional surgery?
 - What changes can I expect in the implants over time?
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Notes/Additional Information