Premise: wants reconstruction but cannot accept implant - can accept tram or LD flap

### **patient scenario**:

Dr. Lin: Good morning, Mdm Tan. Thank you for coming in today. How are you feeling?

Mdm Tan: Good morning, Dr. Lin. I’m feeling alright, but I’ve been thinking a lot about my reconstruction options.

Dr. Lin: That’s completely understandable. From our last discussion, I understand that you are open to reconstruction but would prefer not to have implants. Could you share more about what concerns you the most?

Mdm Tan: Yes, I really want to have reconstruction after my mastectomy, but I just don’t feel comfortable with the idea of having an implant in my body. I’d prefer something that feels more natural.

Dr. Lin: That makes sense. Fortunately, there are reconstruction techniques that use your own tissue. The two main options are the TRAM flap and the LD flap. Both use your own body’s tissue to create a new breast.

Mdm Tan: That sounds more like what I want. What’s the difference between them?

Dr. Lin: The TRAM flap uses skin, fat, and muscle from your lower abdomen to reconstruct the breast. It gives a very natural feel and also has the added benefit of a “tummy tuck” effect. However, because it removes some abdominal muscle, it can cause weakness in the abdomen.

The LD flap, on the other hand, uses muscle and skin from your back. It requires less recovery time than the TRAM flap but sometimes needs a small implant or f**at grafting** for volume, which I know you’re not comfortable with. However, if you have enough natural tissue, we may still be able to use it without an implant.

Mdm Tan: I see… so with the TRAM flap, I get a flatter tummy, but I might have weakness there? And with the LD flap, it’s from my back, but I might still need an implant?

Dr. Lin: Exactly. Both options have their advantages and trade-offs. It depends on what’s most important to you—whether it’s preserving abdominal strength, achieving a natural feel, or minimizing recovery time.

Mdm Tan: I think I would prefer the TRAM flap since it doesn’t need an implant and gives a more natural shape. But I’ll take some time to discuss with my family before deciding.

Dr. Lin: That’s a good plan. Take your time, and if you have any questions, we can go through them together.

### **Decisional tool (pros and cons of each modality)**:

* TRAM Flap (Uses abdominal tissue for reconstruction)
  + Pros:
    - Uses your own tissue, making the breast feel and look more natural
    - No need for an implant, which aligns with Mdm Tan’s preference
    - Creates a flatter tummy, like a "tummy tuck"
  + Cons:
    - Longer surgery and longer recovery time (5-7 days)
* LD Flap (Uses back muscle for reconstruction)
  + Pros:
    - Less impact on core strength
    - Shorter recovery time than TRAM flap (3-5 days)
  + Cons:
    - May still r**equire implant or fat grafting for volume,** which Mdm Tan prefers to avoid
    - Potential tightness