Premise: tumor too big but really only want breast conserving and considering oncoplastic surgery - accepting of a slightly longer scar to maintain symmetry of breast

### **Patient Scenario**

**Dr. Koh:** Good morning, Ms. Tan. Thank you for coming in today. I understand that you’ve been considering your surgical options. How are you feeling?

**Ms. Tan:** Good morning, Dr. Koh. I’m feeling quite anxious. I know my tumor is big, but I really don’t want to lose my breast. I want to keep it, no matter what.

**Dr. Koh:** That’s completely understandable. Given the size of your tumor, a standard lumpectomy might not be feasible, as it could leave significant asymmetry. However, there’s another approach we can consider—**oncoplastic surgery**. This combines breast cancer surgery with plastic surgery techniques to remove the tumor while reshaping the breast to maintain symmetry.

**Ms. Tan:** That sounds promising. But how would that work?

**Dr. Koh:** Essentially, we use breast tissue rearrangement techniques to preserve the shape and appearance of your breast after removing the tumor. This may involve moving nearby tissue to fill the space left behind. Since you have a larger tumor, the surgery may require a **slightly longer scar**, but the goal is to keep your breast looking as natural and symmetrical as possible.

**Ms. Tan:** I see. I don’t mind a longer scar if it helps keep my breast looking balanced. What are the risks?

**Dr. Koh:** Oncoplastic surgery is a more complex procedure than a standard lumpectomy, so it may take slightly longer to recover from. Additionally, like with any lumpectomy, you will still need **radiotherapy** after surgery to reduce the risk of recurrence. There’s also a small chance that we may not get clear margins, meaning a second surgery could be needed.

**Ms. Tan:** I understand. But if it means I can keep my breast, I think I’m willing to go for it.

**Dr. Koh:** That’s a very reasonable decision. We will work with our plastic surgery colleagues to plan the best approach for you. Let’s go through the details and set up the next steps.

### **Decisional Tool: Pros and Cons of Each Modality**

#### **Oncoplastic Surgery (Breast-Conserving Surgery with Reconstruction)**

✅ **Pros:**

* **Breast Preservation:** Allows for tumor removal while maintaining breast shape.
* **Improved Symmetry:** Uses plastic surgery techniques to ensure balance and aesthetic outcome.
* **Less Psychological Impact:** Retains natural breast, which may help with body image concerns.

❌ **Cons:**

* **More Complex Surgery:** Longer operative time and recovery compared to a standard lumpectomy.
* **Requires Radiotherapy:** Post-surgical radiotherapy is still needed to lower recurrence risk.
* **Potential Need for Second Surgery:** If margins are not clear, another surgery may be necessary.

#### **Mastectomy Without Reconstruction**

✅ **Pros:**

* **Definitive Tumor Removal:** Eliminates all breast tissue, reducing recurrence risk.
* **No Need for Radiotherapy (in Most Cases):** If lymph nodes are not involved, radiotherapy may not be required.
* **Shorter Overall Treatment Course:** No need for post-surgical radiotherapy, reducing hospital visits.

❌ **Cons:**

* **Loss of the Breast:** May have significant emotional and psychological impacts.
* **Permanent Change in Body Image:** No breast shape preservation unless opting for reconstruction.
* **Longer Initial Recovery:** More extensive surgery compared to lumpectomy.