

## Breast Reconstruction

The diagnosis of breast cancer or other disease of the breast is frightening in many different ways for women, but fortunately there are breast reconstruction techniques available today that can improve appearance and renew self-worth. New surgical procedures and devices have made it possible for surgeons to create a breast that comes very close in form and appearance to a natural breast. Reconstruction is frequently possible immediately following removal of the breast or mastectomy. The type of procedure depends on body type, age, and type of cancer treatment, and the best candidates for post-mastectomy breast reconstruction are women whose cancer seems to have been eliminated. There are many options to explore however; it's not a simple procedure and time should be taken for deep consideration.

Some women find themselves uncomfortable weighing all the possible options, or they are struggling to cope with the diagnosis, while others don't want to have any more surgery than absolutely necessary. Women with health conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, or who have other chronic illnesses may be advised by their surgeons to postpone breast reconstruction, especially if breast is being rebuilt in a more complicated procedure using flaps of skin and underlying tissue. A breast mound is formed by using an implant, a silicone sac filled with salt water or silicone gel, or tissues from the belly, back, or buttocks. Reconstruction also takes more than one surgery due to extra steps required to add a nipple, change the shape or size of the reconstructed breast, or operate on the opposite breast for a better match. Even though a reconstructed breast does not have natural sensations, the surgery offers a result that looks like a breast, and most women are glad they had reconstructive surgery.

All surgery carries some uncertainty and risk, including bleeding, fluid collection, excessive scar tissue, or difficulties with anesthesia, all of which are relatively uncommon. According to comprehensive online sources, breast reconstruction has no known effect on the recurrence of disease in the breast either, and it doesn't interfere with chemotherapy or radiation should the cancer recur. There are many options to consider, and women need to be comfortable with the option they choose before proceeding. Good information on breast cancer, breast reconstruction, and treatments can be found online at [www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org), [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org), or the National Institute of Health at [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov). There's an abundance of pictures, illustrations, and information designed to give women the facts necessary to make an informed decision about breast reconstruction and if it's right for them.