

When Should I Have Reconstruction?

REVIEWED BY STEVEN E. COPIT, MD

Have you had, or will you have, radiation therapy after your mastectomy?

If Yes

Radiation therapy that was or will be performed after mastectomy often delays reconstruction because it can cause side effects that impact surgery or the implant results. Talk to your doctor about delayed reconstruction²

If Yes

Talk to your doctor about delayed reconstruction

If No

When possible, surgeons encourage women to start reconstruction at the same time as the mastectomy, but it can be done after¹

If No

Talk to your doctor about delayed reconstruction

Waiting for, or delaying, reconstruction means you'll have multiple surgeries over a long period of time. Are you up for going through a year or more of reconstruction surgeries?

Having immediate reconstruction means getting two types of major surgery at the same time: one to remove the breast, and one to rebuild it. Do you think you will be emotionally and physically ready to go through two major surgeries at the same time?

If Yes

Talk to your doctor about immediate reconstruction

If No

Talk to your doctor about immediate reconstruction

If Yes

Wearing a breast prosthesis is an option for women who choose not to have reconstruction after mastectomy or lumpectomy that removed a lot of tissue. The artificial breast form is made of silicone gel and fits into a bra cup. If you had double mastectomy, a prosthesis of two breasts are available and are worn like a bra³

Would you like to give wearing a breast prosthesis a try?

If No

If you're not interested in a breast prosthesis or wearing one is uncomfortable, please talk to your doctor about whether breast reconstruction is an option for you

If No

Your doctor may still want to speak with you about other factors that may impact your breast reconstruction surgery and recovery. Talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits

SOURCES

¹ http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments_and_procedures/hic_an_overview_of_breast_reconstruction

² <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/cid/documents/web-content/002992-pdf.pdf>

³ <http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/cancernet-feature-articles/choosing-breast-prosthesis>

⁴ <http://ww5.komen.org/BreastCancer/BreastReconstruction.html>

Do your lifestyle and habits affect breast reconstruction? For example, if you smoke or are significantly overweight, your doctor may not recommend surgery

If Yes

Your doctor may advise you to stop smoking, lose weight or exclude other factors before you have reconstruction, to lower the risk of complications from surgery. Talk with your doctor about any lifestyle factors that may be an issue⁴



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