



# TIP SHEET Breast Reconstruction Surgery

## What You Should Know

The goal of **breast reconstruction surgery** is to replace the skin, breast tissue and nipple that's removed during a mastectomy. The decision to undergo breast reconstruction after cancer surgery is a deeply personal choice. Many women choose to have the surgery because it can:

- Improve emotional and social well-being
- Restore feelings of wholeness and attractiveness
- Eliminate the need for external prosthesis

## Types of Breast Reconstruction

Surgeons typically use one of these approaches to reconstruct a breast:

- **Implants.** This procedure usually requires placement of a skin expander before the silicone or saline implant is inserted.
- **Your own tissue** (known as flaps). These procedures use skin, fat and muscle tissue from other body areas such as the abdomen, back, thighs or buttocks.
- **Combination of implants and own tissue**

Breast reconstruction DOES NOT INCREASE the chance of breast cancer coming back or make it harder to check for recurrence.

Patients often have surgery on the opposite breast—to enlarge, reduce, or lift—to match the shape of the reconstructed breast.

## Q. When should you consider breast reconstruction?

## A. Anytime—as early as your diagnosis or years later.

Learning about your reconstruction options, and the outcome you can expect, should be part of your cancer treatment planning — even if you delay reconstruction or defer your decision until a later time.

Your breast reconstruction options will depend on your disease status and overall health, your treatment plan (such as whether you have radiation therapy) and your preference. Roswell Park offers:

- **Immediate reconstruction** performed at the time of mastectomy or other breast cancer surgery.
- **Delayed reconstruction** performed months or even years after cancer treatment. If you have radiation therapy, you may need to wait several months after completing treatment to allow chest skin to heal. Some women decide years later that they desire a reconstruction.

Our plastic & reconstructive surgeons can help you no matter where you had your cancer surgery.



# Meet the Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Team



**Robert Lohman, MD**

Associate Professor of Oncology  
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery



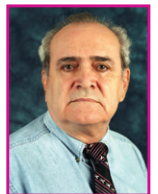
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## Why Roswell Park Cancer Institute?

**Nationally Recognized.** Roswell Park is a National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, the only one in New York State outside of New York City.

**Lymphedema Program.** We provide specialized treatment for lymphedema prevention and management at WNY's only physician-managed lymphedema clinic.

**Comprehensive Support Services.** Nutrition support, smoking cessation, pain management, rehabilitation, pastoral care, psychosocial services and more are part of our care program.

Breast reconstruction is A PROCESS THAT MAY TAKE **6to12** MONTHS

to complete, if you are working around chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Consult with one of our plastic and reconstructive surgeons to learn what options are best for you—and the results you can expect.

Most women have **3to4** SURGERIES to achieve the desired result.

## Q. Will my insurance pay for it?

### A. Likely.

Federal law requires health insurance plans that cover mastectomy costs to also cover reconstruction surgery or other post-mastectomy treatments for female breast cancer patients. Required coverage includes:

- ✓ all stages of reconstruction on the affected breast
- ✓ surgery and reconstruction on the other breast to produce a symmetrical appearance
- ✓ prostheses and treatment of physical side effects of mastectomy such as lymphedema

## Call

1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) to arrange consultation or seek a second opinion.