



# What You Need to Know About Breast Reconstruction Surgery

This packet of information contains choices that are available to you regarding breast reconstruction surgery such as what to expect, options for treatment, area providers, insurance coverage, and additional agencies that you may reach out to for assistance.

**It is important that you discuss these options with your physician who knows your situation and needs.**

**Breast reconstruction** - surgery to “rebuild” a breast - is an option for anyone who has lost a breast because of cancer.

## Insurance Coverage

New York State law requires health insurance policies that provide medical and surgical coverage to pay for reconstruction and for surgery to the other breast to obtain a good match. Required payment for breast reconstruction does not apply to self-insured health plans or to some plans paid for by out-of-state employers. If you have questions about legislation on breast reconstruction or other insurance legislation, call the New York State Insurance Department at 1-800-342-3736 or contact your insurance provider directly.

## If You Don't Have Health Insurance

If you are a New York State resident who does not have health insurance and need treatment for breast cancer, you might be eligible for the Medicaid Cancer Treatment Program (MCTP) or a public health insurance program such as Medicaid or Family Health Plus. The MCTP provides full Medicaid coverage for breast cancer treatment, breast reconstruction following surgery for breast cancer, and other medical expenses for people who meet certain eligibility criteria. People enrolled in the MCTP must use a participating New York State Medicaid provider for all covered medical expenses.

- For more information about the MCTP or to find out whether you might be eligible, visit: [www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/bcctp/bcctp.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/bcctp/bcctp.htm) or call the New York State Cancer Services Program at 1-866-442-2262.
- For more information about Medicaid, visit: [www.health.ny.gov/health\\_care/medicaid/](http://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/) or call the New York State Medicaid Help Line at 1-800-541-2831.

- For more information about Family Health Plus, visit: [www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/fhplus/](http://www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/fhplus/) or call the Family Health Plus Information Line at 1-877-9FHPLUS (1-877-934-7587).

## What kind of surgery is available for breast cancer patients?

- Lumpectomy-having the tumor and the area around the tumor removed.
- Mastectomy-having the breast itself removed.

## If you are having the tumor and the area around it removed you can:

- have your doctor move some tissue in your breast to where your tumor was removed
- reduce the size and reshape the breast that had the tumor
- have your doctor make the other breast smaller, larger or lift it up so that your two breasts look the same
- have your breast rebuilt

## If you are having your breast removed (mastectomy) you can:

- choose to wear a breast form that fits in your bra
- purchase a special bra with a breast form built into it
- have your breast rebuilt by a plastic surgeon
- heal without any intervention

If you have a mastectomy, there are different types of breast reconstruction available. It is important to know that a rebuilt breast will not have natural feelings or functions; but the surgery can give you a result that looks like a breast. *If you think that you want breast reconstruction, it is important to discuss reconstruction with your surgeon before your mastectomy and ask for a referral to an experienced plastic surgeon.* Many women start reconstruction at the same time as their mastectomy; some wait several months or even years.

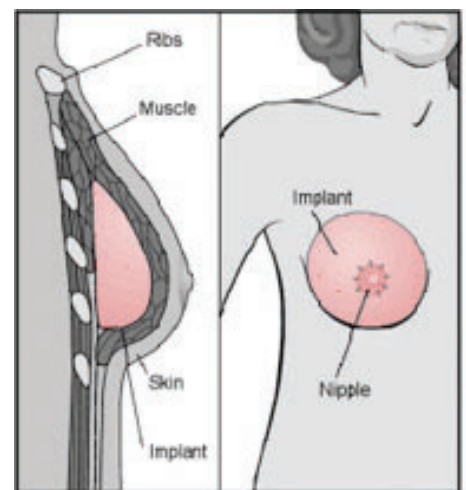
After a mastectomy, a woman might choose to wear a breast form (prosthesis) that fits in her bra or a specially designed bra with a breast form built into it, have her breast reconstructed by a plastic surgeon, or do neither. Some women choose to get body art tattooed over their mastectomy scars. Others opt not to have a breast form, tattoo, or reconstructed breast. This is a highly personal decision. Discuss your options with your plastic surgeon to help you decide the best option for your comfort and appearance.

## What are the options for breast reconstruction?

- Implants
- Tissue Flaps

### Reconstruction with Implants

Implants are plastic sacs filled with silicone (a type of liquid plastic) or saline (salt water). The sacs are placed under your skin behind your chest muscle.



Breast Reconstruction with Implants  
(Image courtesy of NYSDOH)

## Possible Side Effects of Reconstruction with Implants

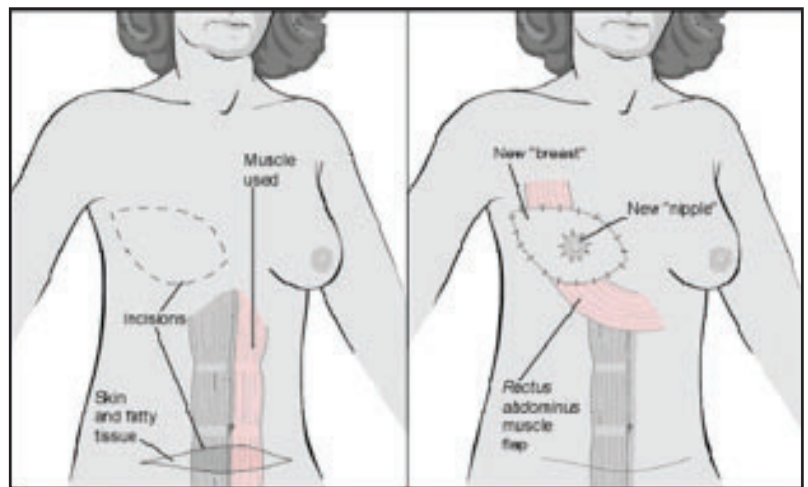
- Most of the time two surgeries are required for implants. First you will have an expander placed to stretch the tissue at the time of the breast removal. This will be followed by placement of a permanent implant a few months later.
- Pain, infection, or rupture (breaking/leaking) of the implant.
- Some people may not be happy with how the results look.
- Scar tissue may form around the implant over time, making it less attractive.
- Implants may not last a life-time; you may need surgery to replace them.
- Saline implants can “crinkle” at the top, or can shift with time, but many women don’t find these changes troubling enough to have the implant replaced.

## Safety Concerns Related to Implants

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) pulled silicone implants off the market due to possible safety issues several years ago. In 2006, after further testing and a modification in the way the implants were made they were allowed to be sold again.
- There continues to be research on the long term safety of breast implants.
- In January of 2011, the FDA announced a possible relationship between saline and silicone gel-filled breast implants and Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (ALCL), a very rare type of cancer. This is currently being investigated.

## Reconstruction with Tissue Flaps

Tissue flap surgeries use muscle, fat, skin, and blood vessels moved from another part of the body to the chest area to rebuild the breast. This tissue can be taken from the: lower stomach area (known as TRAM Flap or DIEP Flap), back, buttocks, or inner thigh. The tissue flap can stay attached (pedicle flap) or detached (free flap) from the body to recreate the breast. You will need to discuss with your physician if you will have this type of reconstruction done at the same time as the breast removal surgery as there are advantages and disadvantages to both.



*Breast Reconstruction with Tissue Flaps (Images courtesy of NYSDOH)*

## **Advantages of Reconstruction With Tissue Flaps**

- Looks, feels, falls, ages, and acts like a natural breast
- If taken from the abdomen you will get a form of a “tummy tuck”
- Does not have the safety concerns of the silicone or saline implants

## **Disadvantages of Reconstruction With Tissue Flaps**

- Leave scars in two places - one where the tissue was taken from and one on the new breast. The scars may fade but never go away completely.
- There might be muscle weakness where the tissue was taken, differences in the size and shape of the breasts, or poor blood supply to the new breast.
- Longer hospital stay (3 days vs. 1 day with implant)
- Additional surgery is usually required, to add a nipple, create a better match to the opposite side, or reshape the built breast.

*\*Choosing a plastic surgeon that has been trained in breast reconstruction and has performed it successfully on many other women can reduce the risks associated with breast reconstruction. A listing of local surgeons and additional resources are located on the following pages.*

## **Qualified Surgeons at Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital**

Katherine O'Donnell, M.D.

Windsong Radiology Group, PC

55 Spindrift Drive

Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone: 716-626-6300 / Fax: 716-626-6312

Michael Peyser, M.D.

Windsong Radiology Group, PC

55 Spindrift Drive

Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone: 716-626-6300 / Fax: 716-626-6312

Marielle Ferstenberg, DO

Windsong Radiology Group, PC

55 Spindrift Drive

Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone: 716-626-6300 / Fax: 716-626-6312

Stuti Tambar, M.D.

General Physician, PC

192 Park Club Lane

Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone: 716-884-3000 / Fax: 716-422-0018

## **Plastic Surgeons**

Danielle Dauria, M.D.

Buffalo Niagara Plastic Surgery, PLLC

6932 Williams Road, Suite 1700

Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Phone: 716-297-7040 / Fax: 716-297-7048

Jordan Frey, M.D.

ECMC-Dept. of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

462 Grider Street

Buffalo, NY 14215

Phone: 716-898-3698 / Fax: 716-898-5587

Raymond O. Schultz, M.D.

5611 Main Street

Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone: 716-631-8500

Kamaljot Singh, M.D.

Buffalo Medical Group, P.C.

325 Essjay Road

Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone: 716-250-5996

To Find additional certified surgeons in the Buffalo Area visit: [www.kaleidahealth.org](http://www.kaleidahealth.org) or visit the American Society of Plastic Surgeons website at: [www.plasticsurgery.org/](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/) or call 1-888-4PLASTI 1-888-475-2784.

For more information about companies that sell breast prostheses, visit: [www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer/MoreInformation/breast-prostheses-and-hair-loss-accessories-list](http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer/MoreInformation/breast-prostheses-and-hair-loss-accessories-list).

## **References/Additional Resources**

Great Lakes Cancer Collaborative

<https://www.greatlakescancercare.org/>

716-884-3000

New York State Department of Health Breast Cancer Treatment

<http://www.health.state.ny.us/publications/0401.pdf>

American Cancer Society Breast Reconstruction After Mastectomy

<http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer/MoreInformation/BreastReconstructionAfterMastectomy/index>

American Society of Plastic Surgeons Breast Reconstruction

<http://forums.plasticsurgery.org/docs/BreastReconstructionBrochure.pdf>

American Cancer Society

1(800) ACS-2345

Local Chapter: American Cancer Society Hope Lodge

197 Summer Street

Buffalo, NY (716) 882-9244

## **References/ Additional Resources cont'd**

The National Cancer Institute Hotline  
*1(800) 4-CANCER*  
*www.cancer.gov*

The New York State Breast Cancer Support & Education Network (NYSBCSEN)  
*1042 Comfort Road*  
*Spencer, NY 14883*  
*Email: info@nysbcscen.org or www.nysbcscen.org*

Cancer Services Program of Western New York  
Erie County  
*197 Summer Street*  
*Buffalo, NY 14222 716-886-9201*

Niagara County  
*1001 11th Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14301*  
*716-278-8285*