

Surgeries for Breast Cancer

There are two main types of breast cancer surgery: lumpectomy and mastectomy.

A mastectomy is surgery to remove a breast. It is performed either to treat or to prevent breast cancer. Only high-risk patients have surgery to prevent cancer.



It is normal to be afraid of cancer. Breast cancer, when found early, is very treatable.

There are four main types of surgery:

- **Lumpectomy** - surgery to remove just the tumor (not the breast). A small amount of normal tissue around the tumor is removed to make sure that all the cancer cells from the edges of the tumor are removed.
- **Total mastectomy** - removal of the affected breast, including the nipple
- **Modified radical mastectomy** - removal of the breast, some of the lymph nodes under the arm, and often the lining over the chest muscles
- **Radical mastectomy** - the removal of the breast, lymph nodes and chest muscles. This type of surgery is rare.

The type of breast cancer surgery depends on the stage of the cancer, size of the tumor, size of the breast and whether there are cancer cells in the lymph nodes under the arm.

Lymph nodes are part of the lymphatic system that helps to fight infections and filters unwanted substances, like cancer cells and bacteria. Cancer cells trapped by lymph nodes can grow.



The type of surgery you have also depends on what is acceptable to you and your doctor. Many women seek a second doctor's opinion before having surgery.

Breast reconstruction is a surgery a woman can choose to have that can rebuild a breast's shape after a mastectomy. A reconstructed breast does not have natural sensations, however most women who had breast reconstruction are glad they did.

A surgeon can reconstruct the breast in many ways.



Some women choose to have breast implants, which are filled with saline or silicone gel.

Another method uses tissue taken from another part of your body. The surgeon can take skin, muscle, and fat from your lower abdomen, back, or buttocks.

Breast reconstruction can be done right away after mastectomy or can happen later. Talk with your doctor about the option that is best for you.

Talk with your health care provider about any questions or concerns you have.

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