

# Breast Cancer: Questions to Ask About Reconstructive Breast Surgery

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Here is a list of questions you may wish to ask your doctor about breast reconstructive surgery. This may help you know what to ask. It is good to have important questions written down so they won't be missed when you talk with the doctor. This sheet also has space to take notes. Later you can read your notes when you are in a relaxed situation. It can be helpful to have a family member or friend to go with you to the doctor. That person can help you listen, take notes and later help you recall what was said.

**Answers to these questions will help you understand reconstructive surgery.**

- What are the types of reconstructive surgery?
- What type is best for me and why?
- What chance is there of rejection and/or infection of any implant?
- Are there any other risks or side effects to consider?
- When is the best time for me to have reconstruction? At the same time as the mastectomy? Sometime after surgery? After chemotherapy?
- If I do not choose reconstruction, what prostheses, or breast forms, are available?

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

**Answers to these questions will help you prepare for your reconstruction and follow-up.**

- How many operations are needed? How long will I be in the hospital? How much time is needed for recovery after each? Are there any medicines to avoid before surgery?
- Is there pain after surgery? For how long?
- Are special bras needed after surgery? Where do I buy them?
- How can I expect the reconstruction to look and feel? How will the reconstructed breast compare in appearance with my healthy breast? Will anything need to be done to the healthy breast?
- Can I detect a possible recurrence after reconstructive surgery?
- Will my health insurance cover this type of surgery?

*Adapted from: Questions to Ask Your Doctor, National Cancer Institute.*