

It's Your Body: Four Things You Need to Know Before Having Breast Cancer Reconstruction

With more breast cancer patients opting for mastectomies and breast reconstruction, plastic surgeons continue to improve and develop new techniques to rebuild the breasts. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, in 2008 about 79,000 women in the U.S. had reconstruction following breast cancer surgery -- nearly 40% more than in 2007. Yet, a shocking 70% of eligible breast cancer patients are not informed of their reconstructive options. It's your body. Here are four tips to become more informed:

Know your options

Today, there are many choices when it comes to surgical techniques for breast reconstruction. The traditional method uses saline or silicone breast implants. Newer "flap" procedures such as TRAM, DIEP, LDMF, and SGAP rebuild the breast with skin, fat tissue and sometimes muscle taken from your own abdomen, upper back or buttocks and may not require an implant.

No one procedure is right for all women

Reconstruction is not one size fits all. Each procedure has pros and cons. Your overall health, body type, cancer treatment, recovery considerations and desired goals help determine the procedure that is right for you.

Involve your plastic surgeon from the beginning

It's a good idea to include your plastic surgeon as part of your healthcare team even before your tumor is removed. Collaboration lets the team plan the treatment that is best for you, even if you decide to have reconstructive surgery down the road.

Feel confident about your plastic surgeon

Newer flap surgeries are highly complex, often involving microsurgery to attach tiny blood vessels. Some procedures like DIEP flap can be done only once, so it is critical to work with a surgeon who is well trained and experienced in the selected technique.

In the past five years alone, Long Island Plastic Surgical Group (LIPSG) surgeons performed nearly 2,500 breast reconstruction surgeries, including all of the most advanced flap surgeries. Our team of 13 surgeons has completed advanced education at some of the most prestigious institutions in the world, including specialized training in breast reconstruction at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the Cleveland Clinic. From breast reconstruction to any type of cosmetic or reconstructive surgery, our experienced surgeons and caring staff are committed to the highest level of care. To learn more, call LIPSG at (516) 742-3404 or visit www.LIPSG.com