Breast Reconstruction: What Every Patient Needs to Know

Latissimus Flap with Implant
Goals of Care

• Restore shape and function after cancer

• Aid in physiological and psychological benefit
  – Relationship with significant other
  – Self esteem and positive body image
  – Feeling of a “whole body”
  – Avoid having to wear prosthesis
Timing for Breast Reconstruction

**Immediate**

**Pros**
- Better cosmetic results
- Less scarring
- Less surgery

**Cons**
- May delay cancer treatment
- Cosmetic result compromised by radiation

**Delayed**

**Pros**
- Cancer treatment first

**Cons**
- Mastectomy scars
- Additional surgery
- Wait time for reconstruction
Latissimus Flap Reconstruction

- Skin, fat, muscle, and blood vessels transferring from the back to the chest
- Implant inserted
  - to replace missing volume
  - achieve desired shape, size, and projection
- Back up option for patients with wound healing problems and prior radiation treatment
Reconstruction 6-9 months

Pre-Operative Surgical Markings

Flap Transfer in the Operating room

Final Appearance with Nipple Reconstruction
Latissimus Flap Reconstruction

**Advantage**

- Blood vessels remain attached
- Natural appearance
- Good option for patients after radiation therapy
- Incision on the back placed under bra stripe
- Quicker procedural time (3-4 hours)
- Short recovery time (3-4wk)
- Variable size

**Disadvantage**

- 2-4 day hospital stay
- Limited implant lifespan
- Two operative sites (back and breast)
- Possible partial loss of muscle function
- Possible revisions
- Visible/palpable implant
- Risk for potential infection
- Risk of flap failure
Potential complications with Implants

- Rupture/Deflation
- Displacement
- Infection
- Capsular contracture
- Difficulty with mammograms
- Need for revisional surgery
  - Visible rippling
  - Unnatural feeling
    - Asymmetry
    - Pain
Nipple Reconstruction

• Patient’s preference
• Nipple is reconstructed after the breast is healed (3-4 months after reconstruction surgery)
  – Use local tissue (projected nipple) + tattoo
  – Three dimensional tattoo (flat nipple)
Risks and Complications of ANY Surgery

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Scars
- Pain
- Loss of sensation
- Asymmetry

- Blood Clots
- Respiratory problems
- Problems with ambulation
- Delayed wound healing
- Need for more surgery