

One-Stage or Two-Stage Breast Implant Reconstruction Procedures

In breast implant based reconstruction, an implant is used to recreate shape, volume and symmetry in your breast(s). Breast reconstruction using an implant can be accomplished in one of two ways: in a Direct-to-Implant Reconstruction (also known as a “One-Stage Reconstruction”), or in a Tissue Expander-to-Implant Reconstruction (known as a “Two-Stage Reconstruction”).

In some cases, there is enough tissue left after mastectomy to insert the implant (made of silicone or saline) directly beneath the skin and muscle without having to expand the breast pocket with an expander. If there isn't enough tissue after mastectomy, a tissue matrix may be used to help with this type of procedure because a tissue matrix acts as a supplement for existing tissue. The benefit of One-Stage Breast Reconstruction is that the patient may not need a second surgery for the expander-to-implant exchange. This is also known as a Direct-to-Implant Reconstruction. It is important to note that one-stage reconstruction is only done in approximately 6-14% of breast implant reconstructions.¹ There are specific parameters to be a good candidate for one-stage reconstruction so be sure to have a discussion with your surgeon.

Alternatively, Tissue Expander-to-Implant or Two-Stage Reconstruction is the most common type of breast implant reconstruction performed. In Tissue Expander-to-Implant Reconstruction, an expander, which works in a similar way to a balloon, is placed beneath the skin and chest muscle. Using a tiny valve beneath the skin, the surgeon injects a salt-water solution into the expander at regular intervals to fill the expander over time (this can be a process of several months until the desired expansion is achieved).

After the skin and muscle over the breast has stretched enough to form a pocket to house the implant, a second procedure (on average 4-6 months later) removes the expander and places a permanent silicone or saline implant into the newly expanded space (also known as the breast pocket). Talk to your surgeon for more details on these options.

1. Millennium Research Group Market Tracking Study October 2009

Important Information: Every patient is different and their reconstruction options and their results may vary. All depictions on the site are for illustration purposes only. Whether or not you have breast reconstruction is a decision you need to make in consultation with your physician. Only you and your physician can determine the best option for you. Please ask your doctor to explain the benefits and risk of various reconstruction options and whether they are right for you.

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