

Lumpectomy/Mastectomy Comparison

Female Patient

If your breast and tumor are within certain size limits, your surgeon may offer you the option of a lumpectomy instead of a mastectomy. Ask your surgeon if there are any additional variables in your surgical decision that may be added to the list below.

If you have the option of choosing either a lumpectomy or a mastectomy, the decision can be very difficult. It needs to be a decision you make in consultation with your physicians. Remember, the option to choose is not available for some types of cancer but is available to a woman who has a tumor within certain size limits in comparison to the size of her breast. Your surgeon will share with you the criteria for this decision. It is imperative that you feel comfortable with the decision. Studies document that a lumpectomy, even if there is local recurrence, does not negatively affect survival rate in patients from cancer. The inconvenience is from the possible necessity for a second surgery.

Lumpectomy

Factors That May Disqualify You For a Lumpectomy:

- Pregnancy, if radiation therapy is required
- More than one primary tumor in breast
- Mammogram with evidence of scattered microcalcifications in other parts of the breast
- Location of tumor in breast (may have poor cosmetic results)
- Size of tumor (tumor too large or breast that is too small in relation to size of tumor)
- Prior radiation therapy to breast or chest area
- Collagen vascular disease
- Severe chronic lung disease
- Evidence of remaining tumor in ducts surrounding tumor
- Restrictions on travel or transportation to clinic for daily radiation for up to six weeks

Advantages of Lumpectomy:

- Saves a large portion of the breast, usually the nipple and areola
- Allows you to wear your own bras
- Rarely requires reconstruction or the wearing of a prosthesis
- Shortens surgery recovery time, usually several weeks
- Shortens hospitalization time; may be performed as outpatient
- Psychologically, surgery may be easier to accept unless the fear of monitoring the remaining breast tissue monthly through breast self-exam is too overwhelming

Disadvantages of Lumpectomy:

- Possible risk of cancer recurrence in remaining breast tissue
- Several weeks, usually up to six weeks of radiation therapy to the remaining breast tissue
- Changes in texture, color and sensation of feeling to the breast from radiation
- Decrease in size of remaining breast tissues after swelling decreases following radiation treatments

- Monthly breast exam on remaining breast tissue to monitor for recurrence, with exam becoming more difficult because of increased nodularity (lumpiness) from radiation therapy
- Possibility of future second lumpectomy or mastectomy if recurrence in breast

Mastectomy

Advantages of Mastectomy:

- Removes approximately 95 percent of all the breast gland, includes the nipple and areola, thus reducing local recurrence to the lowest degree
- Reconstruction of the breast is available using your own body tissue or synthetic implants immediately at the time of surgery or years later

Disadvantages of Mastectomy:

- Body image changed because of removal of breast
- Need for prosthesis or reconstruction to restore body image
- Recovery time slightly longer than lumpectomy patients

If you are having problems making your decision, you may wish to speak with a patient who has had the procedure. Ask your healthcare provider if there is someone who will be willing to talk with you. Your local American Cancer Society's Reach to Recovery program coordinator can provide you with the name of a volunteer who will be willing to share her experience of having either a lumpectomy or a mastectomy.

Helpful Consultations:

- **If you are considering a lumpectomy**, it is helpful to have a consultation with a radiation oncologist to discuss radiation treatments. Often, this consultation will give you additional insight to make an informed decision.
- **If you are considering mastectomy**, a consultation with a plastic surgeon to discuss reconstructive options will give you additional insight.