

## **BREAST RECONSTRUCTION- GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Breast Reconstruction Options**

- Every woman has a unique situation. The type of breast reconstruction procedure available to you depends on several factors- your medical diagnosis, your general health, your current breast shape and size, and your goals for reconstruction.
- In most cases, the first step of reconstruction, placement of tissue expanders, is done immediately following mastectomy.
- Following expansion and preparation of the breast pocket, final reconstruction may be performed using a prosthesis (implant) or with your own tissue (tissue flap).

### **What to Expect**

- Reconstructed breasts will never look exactly like your original breasts. The goal is to create the silhouette you desire based on the available reconstruction options. This includes the opportunity to lift, shape and resize the breast contour.
- Common sensory abnormalities following surgery include numbness, warmth, tingling, vibrations, and itching along the upper arm, armpit and chest. These sensations are a result of the nerves being cut or moved during the mastectomy and will gradually resolve with time. However, some degree of numbness may be permanent.
- Discomfort following surgery is normal. You may experience a slight stinging or itchy sensation along the incision lines. You may also note some tenderness along your lower rib cage. These sensations will decrease after surgery with a combination of medication and time.

### **Available On-Line Resources**

- [ww5.komen.org](http://ww5.komen.org)
- [www.nationalbreastcancer.org](http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org)
- [www.plasticsurgery.org/reconstructive-procedures/breast-reconstruction.html](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/reconstructive-procedures/breast-reconstruction.html)
- [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)
- [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org)

## **Brief Overview of Staged Breast Reconstruction**

### **Stage 1**

- During stage 1, Dr. Beck will place a tissue expander into the skin pocket created by removal of breast tissue. This expander will stretch the breast tissue and create a strong, soft pocket capable of supporting either an implant or your own tissue (flap).
- Drains will be placed during stage 1 reconstruction to prevent fluid accumulation outside of the expander in the reconstructed breast. These drains will be removed when 24 hour output is less than 25 ml (about 1 and ½ tablespoons).
- The average hospital stay following Mastectomy and Tissue Expander placement is 1-2 days.
- Once the drains are removed, the breast skin appears healthy, and the incisions healed (approximately 3-4 weeks after surgery) you will begin your expansions.
- Visits for expansion are generally every 2-3 weeks. The volume placed at each visit and total number of visits depends on how easily your breast tissue accepts the added volume and how large you desire to be.
- If additional intervention is necessary after tissue expander placement:
  - Expansion will continue through chemotherapy
  - Expansion will wait until the conclusion of radiation therapy

### **Stage 2**

- Stage 2 is scheduled approximately 6-8 weeks after your final expansion is completed. This date may change if you need additional treatments such as chemotherapy or radiation.
- At this time, the tissue expander is removed and replaced with either a permanent breast prosthesis (implant) of or your own tissue (flap).
- Implant placement is typically performed as an outpatient procedure with an at home recovery time of 2 weeks.
- Tissue Flap placement is performed as an inpatient procedure with 3-5 days of hospital monitoring before discharge home.

### **Stage 3**

- Stage 3 is generally the final stage in your breast reconstruction. It is scheduled 2-4 months after the permanent breast implant or tissue flap is placed.
- If you need nipple reconstruction it is done at this time.
- Contour irregularities are addressed with fat grafting and minor revisions.
- Stage 3 procedures are typically performed on an outpatient basis with an at home recovery time of 1-2 weeks.

**AFTER RECONSTRUCTION FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTIONS**

It is important to be seen by Dr. Beck after your initial post-op checks. He will see you for long term follow-up appointments at 3 months, 6 months and 1-year post-op. If you desire areola tattooing, Dr. Beck can make these arrangements during your follow-up. For your convenience you may schedule your appointments at either our Southlake or Dallas office (see below). To schedule your appointment please call us at 214-818-4751 between the hours of 8:30 am – 5:00 pm at least 1 week prior to your desired date.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL DR. BECK**

If you need immediate care, please call Dr. Beck anytime on his cell. There is no such thing as a minor question. I would rather you call me than wonder and not do the right thing, so please call my office, or email me anytime.

Dr. Beck’s cell: given at time of surgery

Dr. Beck’s office: 214-818-4751

Dr. Beck’s email: [drbeck@dpsi.org](mailto:drbeck@dpsi.org)

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