

One
COSMETIC AND
PLASTIC SURGERY

Feel like "you" again.



Carolinus HealthCare System

Feel like “you” again.

At CMC Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery, our mission is to help you emerge from breast cancer treatment feeling restored, renewed and like yourself again. Offering the most advanced breast reconstruction techniques and care available in the region, we can help you regain the appearance you seek and return to your normal activities and lifestyle with confidence.

Whether you’ve had a mastectomy, lumpectomy, radiation therapy or chemotherapy, we provide many state-of-the-art breast reconstruction options. Leading the field in our region, we are the first and only physicians in Charlotte to offer the DIEP (deep inferior epigastric perforator) flap procedure, the latest in breast reconstruction technique.

But, we offer more than clinical expertise. We understand the physical and emotional toll of breast cancer surgery and treatment. Embracing a patient-centered approach, we offer compassionate, personalized care aimed at supporting you throughout your journey to becoming “you” again.



Your rights. Protected by law.

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act (WHCRA), signed into law in 1998, provides important protections for women who choose breast reconstruction following mastectomy.

Under WHCRA, group health plans, insurance companies and HMOs that provide coverage for mastectomy must also cover reconstructive surgery, procedures to the other breast to achieve a symmetrical appearance, prostheses and other procedures related to mastectomy, including treatment of lymphedema.

Patient evaluation

Breast reconstruction following cancer treatment requires a thorough evaluation of two critical areas before reconstruction decisions can be made.

1. Cancer treatment

We fully assess your treatment history, including procedures, surgery, and radiation or chemotherapy, as well as ongoing or planned treatment. We believe the first priority is the treatment advised by your surgeon and oncologist.

2. Patient variables

There are a number of variables specific to each patient that can impact your breast reconstruction treatment plan, including:

- Your body type, size and build: This determines whether you have enough tissue in various places for reconstruction options that use your body's own tissue.
- Surgical history: Surgeries you've had, such as abdominoplasty (tummy tuck), may impact which treatment is recommended.
- Social history: Smoking slows the healing process and increases your risk of complications; it must be discontinued at least two months before surgery.
- Patient wishes: You are the center of our treatment team and your preferences are important in making treatment decisions.

Post-lumpectomy reconstruction

If you've had a lumpectomy, with or without radiation therapy, the affected breast is likely to look different from your other breast. We offer a number of options to restore the appearance of the post-lumpectomy breast and make both breasts look as similar as possible.

Small lumpectomy

Fat grafting is frequently the most desirable treatment choice. Using liposuction, our surgeons take fat from another part of your body, process it and inject it into the place in your breast where the lumpectomy was performed. Adequate blood supply is required for the grafted fat cells to survive, limiting the volume of fat that can be grafted. Multiple fat grafting procedures may be necessary.

Medium lumpectomy

These can be treated using procedures that involve shifting or rearranging tissue from the armpit area or the back to fill the area in the breast where the lumpectomy was performed.

Large lumpectomy

These are more difficult to treat using the less invasive techniques. A completion mastectomy followed by full breast reconstruction is often the best treatment when a large lumpectomy has been performed.



A closer look at implant reconstruction

Advantages

- *Shorter operation*
- *Body size and tissue availability less of a factor*
- *Variety of sizes available*
- *No problems that may arise in taking tissue from other parts of your body*

Disadvantages

- *More complications with radiation treatment*
- *Greater risk of infection*
- *Not permanent*
- *Risk of capsular contraction (tightening/hardening of scar tissue around implant)*

Post-mastectomy breast reconstruction

Breast reconstruction following mastectomy includes four general steps:

1. breast mound creation
2. breast mound reshaping or implant exchange and adjustments to the normal breast to achieve symmetry
3. nipple reconstruction
4. nipple areolar tattoo

With skin-sparing or nipple-sparing mastectomies, the steps are similar but with some variations.

Expect a three-month recovery period between each stage, with the process generally taking one year from beginning to end. Breast reconstruction can begin immediately at the time of mastectomy or at any time afterward.

Breast mound creation

The first step in breast reconstruction is creation of a new breast mound, which can be accomplished using one of two techniques: artificial breast implants or autologous breast mound creation using your body's own tissue. Most women are good candidates for either procedure, and although the risks are small, each has its own set of risks and benefits.

Breast mound creation using implants

In implant-based breast reconstruction, a tissue expander (a special type of implant that can be adjusted in size) is placed under the pectoralis muscle in the chest wall (*figure A*). During a series of follow-up office visits, we gradually and gently increase the size of the expander by injecting saline into it via a temporary port.

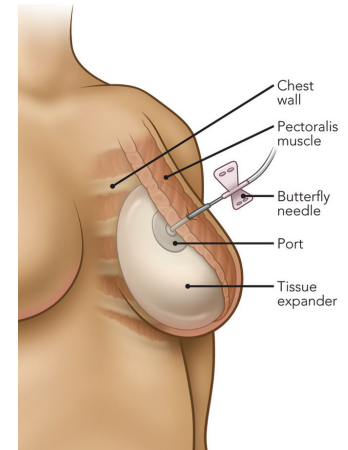


Figure A

Once the desired size is achieved, and following a three-month healing period, we remove the tissue expander and replace it with a permanent breast implant (*figure B*). This procedure takes

approximately one to two hours for each breast and usually requires an overnight hospital stay. Patients typically recover in three to four weeks.

Autologous breast mound creation

CMC Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery is the regional leader in state-of-the-art autologous breast reconstruction, which uses your own tissue to create a new breast mound.

We are the first and only practice in the area to offer perforator flap breast reconstruction using DIEP, SGAP, TUG or PAP flaps. These leading-edge microsurgery techniques offer the advantage of using your own tissue while also leaving nearby muscles intact, helping you maintain muscle function, tone, and strength and decreasing the incidence of hernias. Other benefits include less

postoperative pain, fewer complications and shorter recovery.

The various perforator flap procedures differ in the donor site from which tissue is grafted for use in breast reconstruction. Tissue may be grafted from the abdomen (DIEP), hip/buttocks (SGAP), inner thigh (TUG), back upper thigh (PAP) or other areas. The recommended procedure will be based on your individual body composition and where tissue is available for use in breast reconstruction.

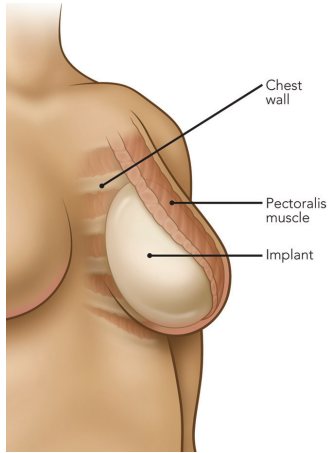


Figure B

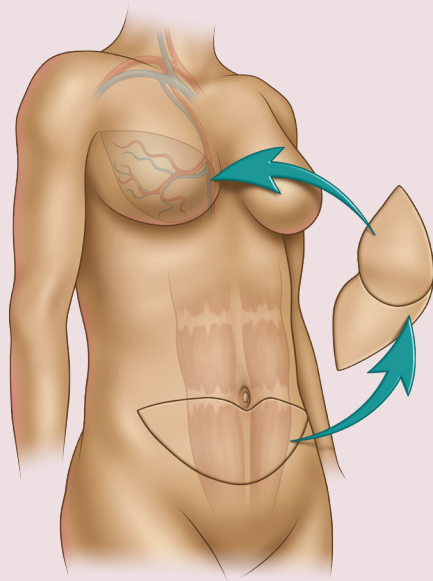
A closer look at autologous reconstruction

Advantages

- *No artificial material; uses your own tissue*
- *More natural appearance and feel*
- *Preserves muscle function and strength*
- *Breast size adjusts with weight changes*
- *Fewer long-term problems*
- *Permanent*
- *Reduction in abdominal fat (DIEP procedure only)*

Disadvantages

- *Longer operation and recovery time*
- *Body size/type limitations (must have enough tissue available)*
- *Options for reconstruction may be limited by surgical history*



In DIEP flap breast reconstruction, abdominal skin and fat are removed and used to create a new breast.

DIEP flap

The most common autologous breast reconstruction procedure we offer is the DIEP flap, which uses excess abdominal skin and fat removed from the area below the belly button to reconstruct the breast. This procedure was derived from the commonly used TRAM (transverse rectus abdominis myocutaneous) flap, but is performed without loss of abdominal muscles.

Perforator flap procedures are more complicated than other types of breast reconstruction, requiring delicate microsurgery to harvest and reconnect blood vessels. These surgeries may last 5 to 10 hours and typically require a 4- to 5-day hospital stay. Total recovery from the procedure takes 4 to 6 weeks.

An advantage of DIEP flap surgery is that tissue taken from the abdomen is much like breast tissue, resulting in a breast reconstruction with a more natural look and feel. An added benefit for you: the loss of excess abdominal fat provides an improved abdominal contour.

The DIEP flap procedure is state-of-the-art breast reconstruction offering:

- *Use of your own tissue for breast reconstruction*
- *A permanent, natural-looking and feeling breast*
- *Preservation of muscle function, tone and strength*
- *Decreased incidence of post-surgery hernias*
- *Less postoperative pain*
- *Fewer complications*
- *Reduced abdominal fat*

Carolinas HealthCare System has the only physicians in the Charlotte region who perform this advanced procedure.

Second-stage procedures

Three months after breast mound creation, the second stage of breast reconstruction begins.

For implant-based reconstructions, we remove the tissue expander and replace it with your permanent breast implant. For autologous reconstructions, we shape and fine-tune the breast to create the most natural look possible.

If there are discrepancies between the reconstructed breast and the normal breast, we may also perform a procedure on the normal breast to create symmetry. Possible procedures may include:

- Mastopexy (breast lift)
- Breast reduction
- Breast augmentation
- Mastopexy combined with augmentation

The decision about symmetry procedures on the normal breast is completely yours. We will review the details of the operative techniques, including risks and benefits, to help you make an educated decision about what's right for you.

Nipple reconstruction and areolar tattoo

The third and fourth stages of breast reconstruction are creation of a new nipple and application of an areolar tattoo.

After the desired breast shape and symmetry have been achieved and allowed to heal for three months, nipple reconstruction may begin. A number of options are available and we will review them with you so you can make an informed choice.

Three months after nipple reconstruction has been completed, tattooing to replicate the look of the areola may be performed.

Nipple reconstruction and areolar tattoo are optional procedures, although most women choose to have them performed.





Lymphedema treatment

Treatment for breast cancer commonly includes biopsy or removal of lymph nodes near your breast. These procedures can disrupt the flow of your lymphatic fluid, resulting in different degrees of lymphedema or swelling in the affected arm. This swelling can cause severe pain, repeated infections and difficulty performing everyday tasks.

The mainstay of treatment for lymphedema focuses on physical therapy, lymphatic massage and compression garments. More recently, advances in microsurgical technique have led to the development of surgical procedures to treat lymphedema.

For patients who are good candidates, CMC Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery offers procedures that repair scarring from previous surgery, replace lymph nodes that were removed or redirect the flow of the lymphatic fluid. These procedures may help patients manage or improve the lifelong symptoms of lymphedema. We will work with your physical therapist to incorporate these advanced procedures into a treatment plan that works best for you.

Support throughout your journey

Breast reconstruction is a long process requiring patients to make a strong commitment to treatment and follow-up care. Our commitment to supporting you throughout this transformation is just as strong as the one you will need.

Our commitment includes ensuring that you are completely informed about all reconstruction options, offering the most advanced techniques available for breast reconstruction in the Charlotte area, and providing a patient-centered, supportive environment to carry you through the breast reconstruction process.

Call us for an appointment and begin the journey back to being “you.”



For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact one of our offices or visit us online.

CMC Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery

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CarolinasHealthCare.org/Cosmetic-and-Plastic-Surgery



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