

Mastectomy: questions for your breast surgeon

For the visits where the type of mastectomy or lumpectomy, lymph node procedure, and timing decisions are made. *Use these as inspiration. Coordinate with your plastic surgeon if reconstruction is part of the plan.*

ABOUT MY SURGERY

1. What type of surgery do you recommend — lumpectomy, simple mastectomy, modified radical, double, prophylactic?

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2. Why this approach for my specific cancer / risk profile?

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3. What does the incision look like, and where?

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4. Will I have drains, how many, and for how long typically?

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5. How long is the surgery, and what does the day look like (admission, time, recovery)?

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LYMPH NODES

1. What lymph node procedure are you doing — sentinel node biopsy, axillary dissection?

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2. Will the decision change based on what's found during surgery?

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3. What's my risk of lymphedema with each option?

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4. What restrictions will I have on the affected arm afterward (BP cuffs, IVs, blood draws)?

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PATHOLOGY AND FOLLOW-UP

1. When will I have pathology results, and how will I receive them?

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2. What information will the pathology give us — margins, grade, receptor status?

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3. What if margins are positive — does that mean another surgery?

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4. Will I need additional treatment (chemo, radiation, hormone therapy) afterward, and when is that decided?

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RECONSTRUCTION COORDINATION

1. Do you recommend immediate or delayed reconstruction for my situation?

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2. When should I see the plastic surgeon — before this surgery, or after?

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3. If I'm going flat, will the closure be optimized for that aesthetic?

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4. How does radiation, if needed, affect reconstruction timing?

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RECOVERY

1. What does week 1, week 4, week 8 look like for someone with my surgery?

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2. When can I drive, lift, return to work, exercise?

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3. What range-of-motion goals should I have, and when does PT start?

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4. What signs of complication should make me call right away?

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This sheet is for inspiration only. Always consult your medical team for guidance specific to your situation. Inspired Comforts is not a medical provider.

By the Inspired Comforts editorial team · inspiredcomforts.com