



Breast reconstruction

What is it?

Breast reconstruction is making a breast for someone who has lost a breast through surgery, or making or refashioning a breast for someone who has not had the breast develop fully or develop normally.

Is Mr Callan experienced at this procedure?

This is an important question to ask. Not only is Mr Callan experienced at this procedure, but he performs breast reconstruction regularly and keeps up to date with the latest techniques. It is also important to know that as a fully trained plastic surgeon Mr Callan performs this procedure to the high standards of Australian Plastic Surgery.

Can I see photographs?

You can see photographs in our office when you have a consultation. As Mr Callan performs breast reconstruction frequently, there are large numbers of photographs to look at many of which will be of patients with a problem similar to yours. We do not publish photographs on the web for a number of reasons, but the most important of these is that you need realistic photographs for the particular type of breast reconstruction you will need.

Who has breast reconstruction?

The commonest group are women who have had a mastectomy for breast cancer. The second group are younger women who have an absent breast developmentally or whose breast has not formed normally. Such breasts may be small or tubular in shape or not formed at all.

Am I suitable?

You need to be sensible, honest about your reasons, happy with your informed decision, and be as healthy as possible. What would stop me from having the surgery? You must not be smoking, outside the BMI range of 18-28, under stress when making your decision, or have a medical condition that would make surgery unsafe.

How is it done?

Breast reconstruction surgery is done in a fully accredited hospital. The type of breast reconstruction surgery you require is something we discuss extensively with you. It can be done using your own tissue. Such examples include using tissue from the abdomen, back or buttock, the other breast or even the same breast if you are only having part of the breast removed. It can also be done using an implant. A combination is also a possibility depending on your body and the breast size we need to make. The commonest tissue reconstruction uses the tissue removed in a tummy tuck, so you get a bonus tummy tuck as well as a breast reconstruction.

When is it done?

For patients having mastectomy the surgery can be done at the same time if no radiation treatment is planned and if it can be coordinated. For patients who have already had a mastectomy they must be finished all other treatment (apart from medication). For younger women with breasts which have not developed as they should a good time is when the breasts have stopped growing.

What are the benefits?

This is entirely a personal matter but for many this is a difficult time that requires much discussion and sensitivity. Symmetrical and shapely breasts are the aim of surgery. While we may fall short of this ideal we can get you as close as possible.

What are the risks?

All surgery carries some element of risk. You can minimize your risk by being as healthy as possible and as psychologically prepared as possible, by selecting an experienced and qualified surgeon, and giving yourself a stress free time during which to recover. Despite this there are some risks that you will need to discuss. There are other risks common to all surgery, and you should be aware of these.

Are there scars?

The incisions for the surgery vary depending on the type of reconstruction, and are always secondary to achieving a good breast with shape. The incision lines are kept away from areas that are visible particularly the cleavage and outer breast. As a rule the incision lines always visible, but can be inconspicuous unless specifically searched for in many cases.

How long am I in hospital for?

This depends but can be anywhere from one to five days, depending on the type of surgery. While not particularly painful, longer surgery such as tissue reconstructions can cause some nausea for a day or two. You will be given plenty of medication if it is required to keep you comfortable.

How long will I need to recover?

This varies but usually ranges from two to six weeks. You must not drive until you are fully recovered from both the anaesthetic and the discomfort of surgery so as you are fully capable. If in doubt, don't.

Do I wear a garment after surgery?

For surgery using your own abdominal (tummy) tissue you will have the same requirements as an abdominoplasty. For others a soft bra is all that will be required.

Will I need to be seen after surgery?

Yes. We will keep in close contact with you by telephone for the first few days after you leave hospital, and then will see you about five days after surgery, then at two weeks, then at three months. You are of course welcome to call or visit anytime with any concerns.