



**PETER
CALLAN**

PLASTIC SURGEON

Breast Reconstruction

What is it?

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

Is Mr Callan experienced at this procedure?

Mr Callan has many years of experience at this procedure. He performs breast reconstruction regularly and keeps up to date with the latest techniques. You can be sure that, as a fully trained plastic surgeon, Mr Callan performs this procedure to the highest standard available.

Can I see photographs?

You can see photographs of people who have had this procedure when you have your consultation. As Mr Callan performs this procedure frequently, we have a large number of photographs of those you have had the type of breast reconstruction you may be suitable for.

Who has breast reconstruction?

The most common group are women who have had a mastectomy due to breast cancer. Another group is 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 and honest about your reasons for wanting breast reconstruction and happy with your informed decision. You should also 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?

Mr Callan performs all his surgery at St John of God Hospital in Geelong, a fully accredited hospital. The type of breast reconstruction surgery you require is something we will discuss extensively with you at your consultation. Reconstruction can be done using your own tissue, e.g. from the abdomen, back, 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 of implant and your own tissue is also a possibility, depending on your body type and the breast size we need to make. The most common tissue reconstruction uses the tissue removed in a tummy tuck, so you get a tummy tuck as well as a breast reconstruction.

When is it done?

For patients having mastectomy, breast reconstruction 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 suitable time is when the breasts have stopped growing.

What are the benefits?

What you get out of surgery is entirely a personal matter. For many women breast reconstruction comes at a difficult time and requires much discussion and sensitivity. Symmetrical and shapely breasts are the aim of surgery. While we may not be able to achieve the idea, we certainly try to get you as close as possible.

What are the risks?

All surgery carries some element of risk. You can minimise your risk by being as healthy as possible and as psychologically prepared as possible, by selecting an experienced and qualified surgeon, and by giving yourself a stress free time during which to recover. The particular risks and complications of this surgery will be discussed at your first consultation. There are other risks common to all surgery and you will be made aware of these.

Will I have scars?

The incisions for the surgery vary depending on the type of reconstruction, and are always a secondary considering 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 are always present but are inconspicuous in most cases.

How long will I be in hospital?

Anywhere from one to five days, depending on the type of surgery and how you are after the anaesthetic. While not particularly painful, longer surgery such as tissue reconstruction can cause some nausea for a day or two. You will be given 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. It's a good idea to take some time out from more strenuous activities so you don't prolong your recovery. The same guidelines apply to exercise, with mild to moderate exercise allowable early on and full aerobic activities after six weeks. You can shower after surgery. You must not drive until you are fully recovered from both the anaesthetic and the discomfort of surgery. If in doubt, don't.

Do I wear a garment after surgery?

For surgery using your own abdominal tissue you will need to wear a pressure garment after surgery for three weeks. This helps the healing process and reduces the possibility of fluid collections. It also acts like a girdle and keeps you compact during recovery. 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 we'll see you about five days after surgery, then at two weeks and at three months. You are of course welcome to call or visit any time with any concerns.