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*Elegant · Elevated · Experience*

PATIENT DECISION GUIDE

# Mastectomy — Understanding Your Three Options

A guide to help you understand aesthetic flat closure, skin-sparing mastectomy, and nipple-sparing mastectomy — what each involves, who each is right for, and what honest expectations look like for all three.

### AESTHETIC FLAT CLOSURE

*No Reconstruction*

- Mastectomy with deliberate flat chest wall result
- Planned from the start — not a default or fallback
- Smooth, well-contoured result when properly planned
- Shortest recovery — least surgical complexity
- No implant, no donor site, no long-term maintenance
- All future reconstructive options remain available

### SKIN-SPARING MASTECTOMY

*Nipple Removed, Skin Preserved*

- Removes all breast tissue including nipple-areolar complex
- Preserves breast skin envelope for reconstruction
- Standard approach when nipple cannot be safely preserved
- Excellent reconstructive result with immediate implant
- Nipple can be reconstructed or tattooed in a secondary procedure
- Right for tumors close to or involving the nipple

### NIPPLE-SPARING MASTECTOMY

*Nipple & Skin Preserved*

- Removes all breast tissue — preserves nipple-areolar complex
- Most natural reconstructive result
- Oncologically safe in appropriately selected patients
- Intraoperative frozen section confirms nipple tissue is clear
- Ideal for BRCA/prophylactic mastectomy patients
- Sensation often reduced — appearance preserved

THE KEY CLINICAL INSIGHTS

### Three legitimate options. One honest conversation.

Aesthetic flat closure is a complete, valid surgical choice — not a default. A mastectomy planned for flat closure produces a significantly better result than one that was not. Tell your surgeon before surgery, not after. Nipple-sparing mastectomy is oncologically safe in appropriately selected patients — the tissue is fully removed, only the skin is preserved. One honest caveat: most patients experience significantly reduced nipple sensation after mastectomy regardless of type. The nipple is preserved for appearance. Sensation recovery is variable and not guaranteed.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION

### FLAT CLOSURE MAY BE RIGHT IF

- You do not wish to pursue reconstruction now or in the future
- You want to minimize surgical complexity and long-term maintenance
- You want time before deciding — flat now, reconstruction later if desired
- You feel whole without a reconstructed breast

### SKIN-SPARING MAY BE RIGHT IF

- You want reconstruction but tumor location precludes nipple preservation
- Intraoperative frozen section shows retroareolar involvement
- Breast anatomy makes nipple viability uncertain after mastectomy
- Inflammatory breast cancer or Paget disease of the nipple is present

### NIPPLE-SPARING MAY BE RIGHT IF

- Tumor is at least 2cm from the nipple-areolar complex
- Imaging shows no retroareolar tumor involvement
- Breast anatomy supports nipple viability after mastectomy
- Prophylactic mastectomy for BRCA or high genetic risk

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SURGEON

Bring this list to your surgical consultation. Check off the ones you've discussed.

### ABOUT MY OPTIONS

- ■ Based on my tumor location, am I a candidate for nipple-sparing mastectomy?
- ■ If I prefer flat closure, can my mastectomy be planned specifically for that goal?
- ■ What does my imaging show about retroareolar tissue involvement?
- ■ Will intraoperative frozen section be used — and what happens if it is positive?

### ABOUT RECONSTRUCTION & FLAT CLOSURE

- ■ If I choose flat closure now, what does delayed reconstruction involve later?
- ■ Am I a candidate for direct-to-implant reconstruction?
- ■ What does the reconstructed breast look like with each approach?
- ■ Can the nipple be reconstructed later if I choose skin-sparing mastectomy?

### ABOUT SENSATION & APPEARANCE

- ■ What should I realistically expect in terms of nipple sensation after NSM?
- ■ What does a well-planned aesthetic flat closure look like and feel like?
- ■ Is any sensation recovery possible after NSM, and over what timeframe?
- ■ What would you recommend for a patient in my exact situation — and why?

### ABOUT RECOVERY

- ■ What is my expected recovery timeline for each approach?
- ■ Will reconstruction be performed at the same time as my mastectomy?
- ■ What activity restrictions should I expect and for how long?
- ■ When can I expect to see the final result after surgery?

MY QUESTIONS & NOTES

Write your own questions and notes below. Bring this page to your appointment.

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