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Elegant · Elevated · Experience

PATIENT DECISION GUIDE

Oncoplastic vs. Standard Lumpectomy

A guide to help you understand the difference between these two approaches to breast conservation, what the evidence shows, and why the distinction matters for how you feel after treatment.

STANDARD LUMPECTOMY

Tumor Removed, Standard Closure

- Removes tumor and margin of healthy tissue
- Wound closed with remaining tissue at the resection site
- Can leave visible deformity for larger or centrally located tumors
- Correcting deformity requires a separate later procedure
- Re-excision rate approximately 20-25% in published series

ONCOPLASTIC LUMPECTOMY

Tumor Removed + Breast Reshaped

- Same oncologic goals — clear margins, complete excision
- Breast is simultaneously reshaped to fill the defect and restore contour
- Reshaping happens at time of cancer surgery — not later
- Associated with lower re-excision rates than standard lumpectomy
- Symmetry procedure on opposite breast can be performed concurrently

THE KEY CLINICAL INSIGHT

Oncoplastic improves appearance and re-excision rates — not survival.

Oncoplastic lumpectomy does not improve cancer survival compared to standard lumpectomy — because lumpectomy with radiation already produces equivalent long-term survival to mastectomy for most early-stage breast cancers. What oncoplastic techniques measurably improve is the cosmetic outcome and the re-excision rate. Standard lumpectomy carries an approximately 20-25% re-excision rate in published series. Oncoplastic approaches — which allow wider resection with better tissue handling and margin assessment — are consistently associated with lower re-excision rates. Fewer return operations. Fewer delays to radiation. Better appearance. Same survival.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION

ONCOPLASTIC MAY BE RIGHT IF

- Tumor size or location would produce a visible deformity with standard closure
- Breast volume allows reshaping after resection
- Tumor is in an aesthetically sensitive location — lower pole, central, near areola
- You are a conservation candidate with concerns about the cosmetic result
- A contralateral symmetry procedure would improve overall balance

STANDARD LUMPECTOMY MAY BE APPROPRIATE IF

- Tumor is small relative to breast volume and in a favorable location
- Standard closure is expected to produce a satisfactory cosmetic result
- Anatomy or clinical factors do not require reshaping
- Note: if you are unsure, ask specifically whether oncoplastic techniques are available for your case — many patients are not offered them unless they ask

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SURGEON

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

ABOUT MY SITUATION

- Based on my tumor size and location, am I a candidate for oncoplastic lumpectomy?
- Would standard lumpectomy produce a visible deformity for my specific case?
- Is a contralateral symmetry procedure indicated or available for me?
- What technique would you use for my specific anatomy and tumor location?

ABOUT ONCOLOGIC OUTCOMES

- What is the expected re-excision risk with each approach for my situation?
- Will oncoplastic lumpectomy affect my radiation plan or timeline?
- What happens if margins are not clear on final pathology?
- Is there any oncologic reason lumpectomy is not the right approach for me?

ABOUT APPEARANCE & RECOVERY

- What should I realistically expect the breast to look like after healing?
- How long until I see the final result — when does swelling fully resolve?
- What does the scar look like and where is it placed?
- Can deformity from a prior lumpectomy be corrected?

ABOUT MASTECTOMY VS. LUMPECTOMY

- Am I genuinely an equivalent candidate for both lumpectomy and mastectomy?
- If I am choosing mastectomy partly due to appearance concerns about lumpectomy, would oncoplastic techniques change what is achievable with conservation?
- What would you recommend for a patient in my exact situation — and why?
- If I choose lumpectomy, what does my radiation schedule look like?

MY QUESTIONS & NOTES

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

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