

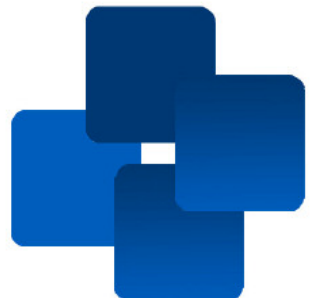
Latissimus Dorsi (LD) Flap Breast Reconstruction

Department of Plastic Surgery
Division of Surgery



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Latissimus Dorsi (LD) Flap Breast Reconstruction

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain the procedure of your breast reconstruction and to give you advice, following consultation with your plastic surgeon.

Introduction

This type of breast reconstruction uses your body's own tissue to recreate the breast mound after mastectomy; this is a major operation.

LD (Latissimus Dorsi) Flap

This operation uses the skin, muscle (Latissimus Dorsi) and fat from the upper back. The flap and its blood supply are tunnelled under the skin just below the armpit. The flap is then placed on the chest to make a new breast shape.

If there is not enough of your body's own tissue to match your other breast, then a silicone breast implant may be used as well.

Before your operation

Before your surgery, but not on the day of your operation, you will attend the Pre-operative Assessment Unit to see the nurse. This is necessary so that we can assess your fitness for the operation and carry out health checks, including blood tests.

The day of your operation

You will be given a gown to change into and special stockings to wear to prevent blood clots in your legs.

You will be seen by the doctor to make sure you understand your operation and to discuss possible risks. You will be asked to sign a consent form for your operation.

The surgeon will use a skin marker to indicate the areas to be operated on.

Your operation may take between two and four hours depending upon your surgeon and the techniques used.

After your operation

You will have an intravenous infusion (drip) in your hand / arm, which provides your body with the required fluid, until you are able to drink the correct amount of fluid unaided (usually 48 hours).

You will also have a PCA (pain controlled analgesia) pump in your hand / arm which you control by pressing a button.

This is to provide pain relief when you feel discomfort, you cannot overdose yourself. The pump is usually discontinued after 48 hours and you may then have tablet pain relief.

There will be two plastic drainage tubes coming from the operation sites, one near the underarm area and one coming from your upper back area.

There will be dressings over the operation sites of your new breast and your back.

Stitches are usually dissolvable.

You will be nursed in an upright position, with the arm on your reconstructed side resting on a pillow.

You will be kept warm to allow good circulation to the breast flap. Regular checks of your vital signs (temperature, heart rate and blood pressure) and the flap will be carried out by the nursing staff.

A physiotherapist will visit you on the ward to give you advice on exercises.

You should expect to stay in hospital for four to seven days.

Advice on leaving the Hospital

On leaving the hospital, you will be given an appointment to attend the plastic surgery dressing clinic to check the healing of your wounds.

If necessary you will be given pain relief tablets to take home.

Do expect not to be able to drive for 4-6 weeks (contact your insurance provider for further advice).

You would be advised to take at least 6 weeks off work and avoid heavy lifting during this time.

The dressing clinic will advise you when you can shower and bath.

Wear a good fitting sports bra (no under wires) for six weeks.

If you find it more comfortable (especially at night) you may wear a lycra crop top.

Please note the hospital does not supply bras or lycra crop tops. These should be purchased before your operation.

Loosely fitting short sleeved pyjamas that button at the front are also advisable.

Important information

We strongly advise you to stop smoking before surgery and can provide you with smoking cessation support.

Avoid smoking after your operation as this constricts the blood vessels to your reconstruction and could cause it to fail.

Benefits of operation

- You will no longer have to wear a breast prosthesis
- You will be able to wear the clothes you like
- It may help to increase your confidence regarding your body image and femininity
- At a later date, usually three months after your wounds have healed, you may have a nipple tattoo / reconstruction

Risks of operation

- Surgical site-infection
- Flap failure
- Wound healing problems
- Slight weakness of shoulder on reconstructed side
- Seroma (fluid collection around wound sites)
- Congestion / haematoma (collection of blood around wound sites)
- Very occasionally patients have to return to theatre if any of these problems occur
- Breast reconstruction will leave you with permanent scarring
- Very occasionally you may require a blood transfusion if there is bleeding during or after surgery

Example Photographs



Pre-operative



Post-operative



Pre-operative



Post-operative



Post-operative back scar

Example Photographs



Pre-operative



Post-operative

Other useful sources of information;

Breast Cancer Care

Free phone 0808 800 6000
info@breastcancercare.org.uk

Breakthrough Breast Cancer

Free phone 08080 100 200

Macmillan Cancer Support

Free phone 0808 808 00 00

Contact details -

Ward 11B (24 hours)
01438 781118

Dressing Clinic (8am - 4pm, Monday - Friday)
01438 314333 Ext 4767

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