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Breast Oncoplastic Surgery

Improving Cancer and Cosmetic Outcomes

October 2008

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Editor's Note:

Oncoplastic surgery integrates breast cancer and plastic surgical techniques. The goal is to achieve a better oncologic and cosmetic outcome in patients that require a lumpectomy. Once patients heal from surgery and radiation therapy, I have found the long-term appearance of the breast is often sub-optimal. This is what inspired me to learn oncoplastic breast surgical techniques and apply them to our patients.

John Williams, MD, FACS
Dedicated to Breast Care

Making Cancer Surgery Look Better

How a new surgical technique for removing breast-cancer lesions compares to a traditional lumpectomy:

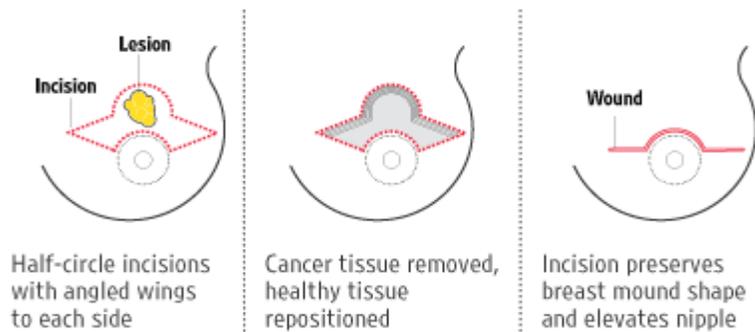
Standard lumpectomy

Leaves breast with unsightly dent and scar visible on the chest



Batwing mastopexy (a common oncoplastic technique)

Breast shape is preserved and scars are hidden under clothing



Sources: The Lancet; Dr. Melvin Silverstein

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Philosophical Approach:

Balancing better cancer margins with optimized cosmetic outcomes is the goal of oncoplastic techniques.

Wider surgical margins reduce the rate of local recurrence of cancer in the lumpectomy treated breast. Local recurrence frequently represents the presence of distant metastases and a poor survival. Larger surgical margins (approaching 10mm) lessen rates of local recurrence along with radiation therapy.

Cosmetically, we try to have patients feel better about their appearance after their cancer treatment, than prior to its diagnosis.

Oncoplastic Techniques:

Anticipate and avoid permanent cosmetic lumpectomy defects:

Closure of the lumpectomy with breast advancement flaps
Placing incisions in non-visible locations
Local latissimus muscle flaps to fill lumpectomy defects

Involve a plastic surgeon in the surgical planning:

Contralateral or bilateral breast reduction for symmetry
Utilization of breast augmentation
Skin sparing mastectomy with reconstruction
Nipple reconstruction

Evolution of Breast Cancer Surgery:

Oncoplastic surgery is a rapidly advancing subspecialty area in the surgical treatment of malignant conditions of the breast. It is currently utilized by only 5% of U.S. breast surgeons. The American Society of Breast Surgeons is actively promoting awareness of these surgical techniques.

“The objective of oncoplastic breast surgery is to improve aesthetic outcomes after the surgical removal of benign or malignant tumors, and to address any other concerns the patient may have regarding size, shape, and/or symmetry of the breast,” said Dr. Gail Lebovic, head of the Cooper Clinic in Dallas. “As a result, patients benefit from careful and complete preoperative assessment that uses an interdisciplinary approach to help define a comprehensive surgical plan.”

**Wall Street Journal article (July 1, 2008)*

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