

First Oncoplastic Appointment – What to Expect

Your first oncoplastic appointment will usually take place in the Breast Care Unit. This is an opportunity to discuss your breast reconstruction options and for you to ask questions. You are very welcome to bring someone along with you for support.

During this visit, you will get to meet:

- A Consultant Plastic Surgeon
- The Breast Reconstruction Nurse Team
- A Consultant Breast Surgeon (If you are having immediate reconstruction or risk reducing surgery)
- Salisbury is a teaching hospital, so your care may involve doctors at different stages of surgical training. They play an important role in your treatment, both during and after surgery, and may assist your consultant in clinic. Parts of your consultation may be carried out by a doctor other than your consultant. If you have any questions regarding this, please speak to your nurse or consultant.

Factors That May Affect your options and timing of surgery

Your reconstruction options may be influenced by several factors, including:

Body type

- **BMI (Body Mass Index)** is a measure used to assess whether an individual's weight is in a healthy range for their height. It is calculated by dividing an individual's weight in kilograms by their height in meters squared (kg/m^2). To help calculate your BMI. For further details please see [Calculate your body mass index \(BMI\) for adults - NHS](#).
- Extremes of weight can increase surgical risk. We recommend a BMI between 22 and 32.
- In Salisbury, we do not offer breast reconstruction using your own body tissue for patients with a BMI above 32. The risks from surgery (including the potentially life-threatening risks of blood clots in your leg or lung) are increased when body mass index is above 30 and are even more increased with BMI above 32.
- If your BMI is low (around 21 or below), autologous reconstruction may not be possible due to limited tissue. Very low BMI can also affect wound healing, so a balanced diet to improve nutrition may be advised.
- Everyone has different fat distribution and skin quality, so the options that are suitable for your build will need assessing by the plastic surgeon.

Breast Cancer treatment

- **Breast cancer treatment** may affect the timing of your reconstruction. Depending on the type of cancer and any additional treatments required (such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or hormone therapy). Some breast cancers and their treatment may mean postponing reconstruction.

Radiotherapy

- **Radiotherapy** to the breast or chest wall can increase the risk of complications during or after reconstruction surgery. Breast implants are generally not recommended for patients who have had or are expected to need radiation therapy. This is because implants are associated with an increased risk of infections, wound healing problems and painful tightening around the implant (known as capsular contracture) in those patients who have also needed radiotherapy.

Fitness

- **Fitness** - As breast reconstruction is a planned surgery, we recommend that you partake in regular exercise to prepare yourself for surgery. You should aim to be able to do 20 minutes of moderate exercise without needing to stop for a rest. Exercise which strengthens your torso, back and core is strongly encouraged, such as regular pilates, yoga or exercise classes.
- **Smoking and vaping.** We require you to have been nicotine free for at least 3 months by the time of surgery, this includes cigarettes, vapes and nicotine replacement products.

Previous scars

- **Previous scars** - Some previous operations may restrict the options available to you. For example, if you have had a previous abdominoplasty (tummy tuck), we may not be able to offer a reconstruction using your abdominal tissue. We do not usually see a problem from previous caesarean section or laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery, but your surgeon will need to assess the area. If you have had previous surgery at another hospital, it is very helpful to bring any information you have about this to the consult.

Please note that you will only be added to the waiting list once all essential investigations have been conducted and the team is confident that the criteria for optimisation has been met for your own safety.

Your appointment will also include:

- A BMI check (height and weight)
- A review of your general health, overall wellbeing and a physical examination, to help guide in the best possible outcomes for you.
- Discussion of treatment options
- Opportunity for you to ask questions
- Medical photography (with your consent)
- You may be required to have a blood test

- Written information will be provided regarding breast reconstruction and teams contact details

Please contact the Breast Reconstruction Nurse Team should you require any further support Tel 01722 336262 ext 3156

We look forward to meeting you.



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