Breast Reconstruction Tram Flap

After a mastectomy, doctors can reconstruct the breast with a procedure known as breast reconstruction tram flap. This involves the actual breast reconstruction procedure, nipple reconstruction, and a nipple tattoo. Learn more about the procedure below.

Breast Reconstruction

- This procedure uses general anesthesia and takes about 4-6.5 hours to complete.
- This procedure requires an inpatient hospital stay between 3-5 days.
- Side effects include temporary pain or discomfort, swelling, numbness, dry breast skin, or permanent scars. Bruising will last between 2-4 weeks while moderate swelling will last between 4-8 weeks and mild swelling will last 2-3 months.
- Risks include poor or delayed healing, prolonged recovery, fluid accumulated in abdomen or breast requiring drainage, failure of flap, secondary surgery, or fat necrosis (hard areas in breast due to poor healing in fat).
- Tasks of daily living may be resumed immediately. You can resume non-strenuous work (no lifting greater than 10 lbs) in 4 to 8 weeks. No strong pushing, pulling or repetitive upper body movements for 4 weeks.
- You can resume 1/3 intensity exercise after 3 weeks; 2/3 intensity after 6 weeks; and full intensity after 8 weeks.
- You should take ibuprofen or narcotics as needed for pain.
- You will need to visit your doctor 7-10 times in the first three months, and then yearly after reconstruction is complete.
Nipple Reconstruction
• Takes place 2-3 months after permanent prosthesis or 6-8 months after mastectomy.
• This procedure takes about 1 hour and can be done in the doctor’s office.
• You will experience bruising for about 2 weeks, swelling for 6 weeks, and redness for about 6-12 months.
• You will need to visit your doctor after 7 days and then again after 2 weeks.

Nipple Tattoo
Pigment is added to the nipple areola area 2-3 months after nipple reconstruction.

- This procedure takes about 1 hour and can be done in the doctor’s office.
- Fading of the tattoo can occur and will need to be touched up in the future.
- You will need to visit your doctor after 6 weeks, then 3 months, and then yearly thereafter.

Contact Boulder Plastic Surgery
If you are interested in breast reconstruction tram flap, contact Boulder Plastic Surgery at 303.578.4193 to schedule a consultation.