

Breast Prostheses – What You Need to Know

The staff of the Tom Baker Cancer Centre is providing you with this information on community resources as a courtesy service. The services offered by these businesses, organizations and independent providers may be of value to you.

However, we cannot fully determine the quality, benefit and safety of the services offered. Therefore, we do not officially endorse any of the resources listed, nor are we responsible for any negative outcomes from accessing these services. Access these services only at your own choice and risk.

Community Resources



Tom Baker Cancer Centre

Mastectomy

What is a mastectomy?

- A mastectomy is surgical removal of the breast usually to treat or prevent breast cancer.
- There are five different kinds of mastectomies:
- Subcutaneous mastectomy: removal of entire breast except for the nipple and the areola (pigmented area around the nipple).
- Total (or simple) mastectomy: removal of the entire breast; no lymph node removal.
- Modified Radical Mastectomy: removal of the entire breast including the lymph nodes under the arm.
- Radical Mastectomy: removal of the entire breast, lymph nodes under the arm and the chest wall muscle. This type of mastectomy is rarely performed today.
- Segmental Mastectomy: removal of approximately 25% of the breast (including the tumour), and the removal of some lymph nodes.

What are the risks of having a mastectomy?

- Mastectomy surgery is considered a very safe surgery
- Some risks for all types of surgery include:
 - Bleeding
 - Infection
 - Injury to nearby tissues
 - Some post-operative pain
 - General anaesthesia risks
- Possible risks associated with the removal of lymph nodes include:
 - Shoulder stiffness
 - Collection of fluid in the armpit
 - Postoperative swelling in same arm (lymphedema)
 - Numb patch on inside of arm

What are my options for replacement of my breast?

- External breast prosthesis
- Breast reconstruction (internal) – saline or autogenous (for example, TRAM flap)

What is an external breast prosthesis?

- It is a “fake” breast that can be worn against the skin, inside a pocket in a mastectomy bra, or attached to the chest wall.
- There are several types of external breast prosthesis including:
 - Silicone breast prosthesis – a weighted prosthesis; made of silicone
 - Non-silicone breast prosthesis – light-weight; made of foam or fiberfill
 - Attachable breast – self-adhesive; attaches directly to chest wall
 - Post-surgical soft form in camisole – a light-weight breast form that fits into a camisole garment; usually used right after surgery
 - Partial breast prosthesis (shaper or shell) – made of foam, fiberfill, or silicone; designed to be worn over your own breast tissue to enhance size and shape; can be worn with a regular bra or a post mastectomy bra

What do I need to know about choosing a prosthesis?

- Phone for an appointment (a fitting can take up to an hour)
- Take someone with you who will give an honest opinion on the suitability of the prosthesis
- Wear a bra that fits well, many women prefer their own brand of bra
- If you normally wear a form fitting T-shirt, blouse or sweater, be sure to take one along with you
- Once you have chosen a prosthesis, you may find that it seems heavy. Wear it for a few hours each day to allow your body to adjust to the weight

What is a post mastectomy bra?

- It looks like a regular bra except that it has stretchy pockets inside to hold a breast prosthesis

How soon after a mastectomy can I wear a prosthesis?

- This timeline is different for everyone and therefore must be discussed with your surgeon

Will others be able to tell that I am wearing a breast prosthesis?

- No one will be able to tell as long as your prosthesis fits properly

Do I need a prescription for a breast prosthesis and mastectomy bra?

- You will require a prescription for insurance purposes only

Will my breast prosthesis and mastectomy bra be covered by insurance?

- Breast prostheses are covered through Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL). Please see page 7 for further information regarding costs
- Mastectomy supplies may be covered through your 3rd party insurance plan. Please call your insurance company to determine your specific coverage

Where can I get breast prostheses and other mastectomy supplies?

- Please see an attached list of approved AADL vendors in Calgary

What is breast reconstruction?

- Breast reconstruction is a surgical procedure that gives you a breast mound following a mastectomy.
- There are several types of breast reconstruction which can be

reduced to these two main categories:

- Artificial implants
- Reconstruction using the woman's own body tissues

Who should have breast reconstruction done?

- This is a personal choice. There are no medical reasons for having breast reconstruction, but many women express some psychological benefit

When should I have breast reconstruction?

- Breast reconstruction can take place at the same time as your mastectomy surgery, or it can be done at anytime in the future
- Discuss the best option for you with your physician

Sources:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus

www.ucsfbreastcarecenter.org

www.surgery.uiowa.edu/surgery/plastic/brecon.html

www.baptistoneword.org/healthinfo

Where can I receive emotional support?

Counselling and Support Department of Psychosocial Resources Tom Baker Cancer Centre

- Phone 403-355-3207
- Counselling and support for you, your family and friends is available free of charge at the Department of Psychosocial Resources at the Holy Cross Site
- This department is staffed by professional counsellors (psychologists and social workers) that are specially trained to help you and your family cope with the emotional, psychological and social stresses which often surface as a result of cancer and its treatment

New Breast Cancer Patient Groups

- For women within their first year after diagnosis of breast cancer
- For women with Stage 1-3 breast cancer
- Each sessions consists of 12 weekly meetings
- There are 3 sessions per year
- Please call 403-355-3207 for more information and to sign up for this group

Group for Women with Metastatic Breast Cancer

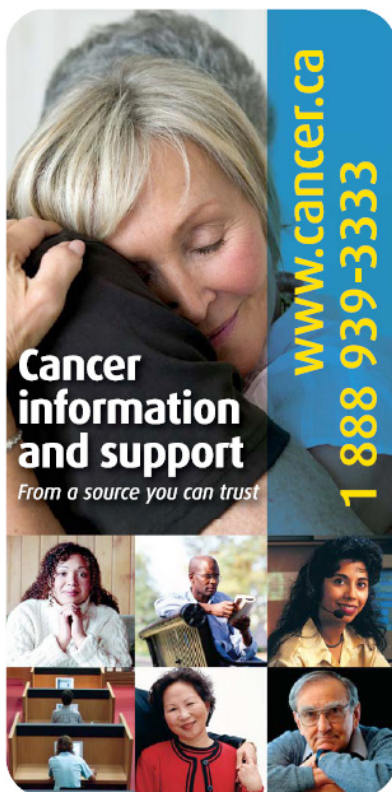
- Please call 403-355-3207 for more information about signing up for this group
- Ongoing weekly meetings – Tuesdays at 1:30 pm in the Psychosocial Department at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre
- Please call 403-355-3207 to book an appointment

Wellspring

- Please call 403-521-5292
- For more information go to www.wellspringcalgary.ca
- Provides ongoing support programs and services for individuals living with cancer

Cancer Connection

- Telephone based program that offers peer support designed to put you and/or your caregiver in touch with someone who has already been through what you are facing.
- Trained volunteers will listen, provide emotional support, and share practical information about living with cancer
- For adults at any point in their cancer experience, and their caregivers
- CancerConnection is a free service available throughout Alberta and the Northwest Territories - Monday to Friday 8:30 am -4:30 pm
- One-on-one, in person visits, or peer support groups can also be accessed by calling 1-888-939-3333 and press #2 to talk to a support specialist.



Canadian Cancer Society **Société canadienne du cancer**

AADL Mastectomy Benefits

What is it?

- Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) assist Albertans by providing financial assistance for mastectomy prosthesis (full or partial) for women under the age of 65 that are a resident of Alberta and have a valid Alberta Personal Health Number (PHN)

Are mastectomy supplies covered?

- Yes, one mastectomy prosthesis per breast** is covered through Alberta Aids to Daily Living every 3 years

**Provide 100% coverage through Alberta Blue Cross for Seniors Program for people age 65 years and over based on AADL's current pricing. Clients must use an approved AADL vendor to obtain their breast prosthesis.

How much will it cost?

- AADL has a cost sharing policy, which requires the client to pay 25% of the cost (s) of the benefit (s) to a maximum contribution of \$500 per family per benefit year (July 1 through June 30)
- AADL will pay for 75% of a breast prosthesis at AADL's current benchmark price (subject to change at any time) and a fitting fee for each prosthesis
- AADL approved mastectomy vendors have contractual obligations to provide quality products at or below AADL's benchmark price
- In addition, you have a choice to pick a prosthesis that costs more than AADL's benchmark price, however you will be responsible for 100% of the amount over the AADL benchmark price, not including your cost share portion.
- For example, if AADL benchmark price was \$316
 - AADL will pay \$237(75% of \$316) of the prosthesis
 - AADL will pay \$22.50 (75% of \$30) of the fitting fee
 - You will pay \$79 (25% of \$316)
 - You will pay \$7.50 (25% of 30%)
 - Your total cost is \$86.50

- If you have Alberta Blue Cross Non-Group coverage, you will be covered for the remaining 25% of costs that are above the allowable coverage
- If you have other 3rd party insurance, please contact them to inquire about your coverage for mastectomy prostheses
- Please be aware that if you are going to use your 3rd party insurance and AADL, AADL must pay first, followed by your 3rd party insurance. If you do not want to access AADL for your prosthesis, this is your choice, but please ensure that your insurance company will cover all costs prior to obtaining the prosthesis, as AADL is not a reimbursement program
- Senior's Blue Cross provides 100% coverage of a benchmark price

What is the next step?

- Make an appointment at the CADL or speak with your community or home Care Nurse
- If you have questions regarding the AADL Program or do not know how to access the AADL Program, please call toll free at 403-310-0000 then dial 780-427-0731
- AADL will provide you with a list of vendors where prostheses are sold
- Please consider booking an appointment with the prosthesis fitter

How do I contact them?

Calgary Aids to Daily Living (CADL)

4020 Bowness Road NW

Calgary, Alberta

Phone: 403-955-6955

Fax: 403-943-2110

Hours: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Mon-Fri

- For up to date information on approved AADL vendors, please visit www.health.alberta.ca/services/aids-to-daily-living.html. Click on the **Program Manual** link, scroll down to the **Mastectomy Prostheses** section heading and click on the **Approved Product List** link to download a PDF listing

Calgary:

AADL Authorized Mastectomy Prosthesis Vendors

Please refer to your local yellow pages directory for a complete listing of vendors.

- Ability Medical Supplies Ltd
3439 – 26th Ave NE
403-263-9994
- Calgary Co-Op Home Health Care
9309 Macleod Trail SW
403-263-9994
- Calgary Co-Op Home Health Care
4938 Richmond Road SW
403-299-4488
- Compassionate Beauty
26, 22 Richard Way SW
403-686-6936
- Kenron Pharmacy
100, 1620 – 29th St NW
403-289-7224
- Shoppers Home Health Care
25A - 180, 94 Ave SE
403-255-2288

Lethbridge:

AADL Authorized Mastectomy Prosthesis Vendors

Please refer to your local yellow pages directory for a complete listing of vendors.

- Leister's Home Care
1224 – 3rd Ave S
403-380-2600
- Shoppers Home Health Care
102, 2045 Mayor Magrath Dr S
403-328-5599
- Shoppers Home Health Care
119 Stafford Drive S
403-327-4511
- Stafford Pharmacy & Home Healthcare
1475 St Edward Blvd N
403-320-6500

Medicine Hat:

AADL Authorized Mastectomy Prosthesis Vendors

Please refer to your local yellow pages directory for a complete listing of vendors.

- Crestwood Pharmacy Ltd
1827 Dunmore Road SE
403-527-4990
- Shoppers Home Health Care
2, 46 Carry Drive SE
403-527-8110

Red Deer

AADL Authorized Mastectomy Prosthesis Vendors

Please refer to your local yellow pages directory for a complete listing of vendors.

- **Millerdale Pharmacy Ltd**
5201 – 43 Street
403-342-1434
- **Shoppers Home Health Care**
70C, 5250 – 22 Street
800-307-6997

