

What is a Lumpectomy/Partial Mastectomy?

- A **lumpectomy**, sometimes called a **partial mastectomy**, is the surgical removal of an area of breast tissue. This is as opposed to a total mastectomy, in which all the breast tissue would be removed.
- After surgery, the removed tissue (“the specimen”) is sent to pathology to be looked at under the microscope by a pathologist. If your surgery is meant to remove cancer, one of the things the pathologist will report is the **margin** status. This refers to the edges of the specimen. If cancer cells are at or close to a margin, your surgeon may recommend **re-excision**.
 - This means you would come back for another day surgery on a different day, and your surgeon would take a little more tissue from that margin.
 - If your surgery is meant to remove something that is benign, you usually don't need to worry about margins.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will a lumpectomy change the shape or size of my breast?

A: Maybe. The answer depends on how much tissue your surgeon needs to remove, where the target area is, and the original size and shape of your breast.

Q: Will I have a scar?

A: Most women have a small, subtle scar at the site of lumpectomy. If you tend to develop dark scars, you are more likely to have a visible scar.

Q: How long does the lumpectomy procedure take?

A: A lumpectomy alone is usually under an hour. You can plan to be at the hospital for at least half the day.

Q: What kind of anesthesia is used?

A: General anesthesia may be used, but you may have the option to have a lighter form of sedation. You will have the opportunity to discuss anesthesia with a pre-op nurse, and then again on the day of surgery with your anesthesiologist.

Q: When will I know my margin status?

A: The final pathology results from your surgery will take 1-2 weeks.