



## **Breast Cancer Basics**

### **Surgical Management in Breast Cancer**

#### **Long Term Outcomes: Breast conserving Therapy vs. Mastectomy**

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**Dr. Medhani Gupta:** Welcome to GRACE breast cancer video series. My name is Medhani Gupta. Today, we'll be chatting about surgical management of breast cancer. I'm joined by Dr. Jessica Young. Dr. Young is an assistant professor with the division of surgical oncology and also oncology at Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, New York. She's also a member of National Comprehensive Cancer Network or NCCN guidelines panel for breast cancer. Welcome Dr. Young. It's a pleasure to have you with us. One of the most common questions that patients ask us is if there is a difference in the long-term outcomes between the breast conservation surgery versus mastectomy, because one of the notions out there is that if patients have mastectomy, if there is any difference in terms of the cancer coming back or the patients living longer?

**Dr. Jessica Young:** That's absolutely a great question. And one huge myth, I think in breast cancer care is that doing more surgery, everyone thinks doing more surgery is better when in fact it really is not. So there were a lot of studies quite a few decades ago that actually looked at mastectomies versus doing lumpectomies and doing radiation in addition to lumpectomy. And really they saw that the survival was exactly the same between these two large groups. And so we really, as a standard considered those to be equal in terms of survival. When we talk about how often breast cancer can come back in this breast, so on the side where you actually have breast cancer now, obviously there's going to be a little bit of difference. So if we take your entire breast off as we do for a mastectomy, I wish I could tell you we got every single breast cell that's out there, but we know that we do leave a little bit behind. And there's maybe about a one or 2% chance that breast cancer can come back along the chest wall or the skin after you have a mastectomy.



If you do a lumpectomy and have radiation, you're leaving quite a bit of breast tissue behind, but we do know that the recurrence rates are probably about six to 8% on average. Which is still a little bit higher than mastectomy, but really actually in the greater scheme of things, not that much higher. And we also have studies that show that if breast cancer were to come back, either after a mastectomy or lumpectomy and they're treated, it really does not change the survival between the two groups, which is why we can say the survival is really equivalent. I should also mention a lot of people think that breast cancer can go from breast to breast, in reality, we really don't consider it that way. Breast cancer is really just in the one breast. And when we talk about a recurrence, we're really talking about coming back on that side. So the opposite breast can get its own breast cancer, but it does not usually get breast cancer from the first one. So taking the other breast off can be helpful in some cases, but it's not really necessary to decrease the chance that it will come back.