

Reconstruction is a Key Consideration for Breast Cancer Patients

Advances in procedures make it a more viable option

Just as education, early screening, testing and treatment has made breast cancer - in many instances - a less dire diagnosis, the option of breast reconstruction surgery no longer needs to be an agonizing one for survivors.

Dr. Pedro Rodriguez, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center, in Rockford, says, while years ago considered strictly a cosmetic procedure - surgical and prosthetic advancements in breast reconstruction makes the post treatment choice much more viable.

"That we can reconstruct the breast with implant-based reconstruction in a more successful way and more successful manner," says Dr. Pedro Rodriguez, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center, in Rockford. "There are patients who will need some other type of flap reconstruction, meaning they will need other parts of their own tissue to be transferred to the breast to reconstruct the breast. But more importantly, implant-based reconstruction has been now the mainstream of reconstruction throughout the U.S. It allows us to reconfigure the tissues. It allows us to provide a stable reconstruction."

With oncology and radiation physicians and support staff, Dr. Rodriguez says OSF Saint Anthony takes a team approach to individualize treatment and recovery for each patient. He says a patient's emotional and physical state must be considered before discussing the realistic breast reconstructive surgery options.

"In correlation with their medical conditions and the type of cancer and the type of treatment they're most likely to undergo, we're able to tailor their reconstructive efforts more appropriately," says Dr. Rodriguez

Understanding that breast cancer treatment and reconstruction is a marathon and not a sprint, Dr. Rodriguez says the satisfaction and self-confidence of the patient is always paramount in measuring the successful conclusion of the journey.

"This is a necessity," say Dr. Rodriguez. "There have been many studies that prove that patients that undergo reconstruction have better self-esteem, they have improved quality of life and they go through their daily life in a much more happy tone."

Also an Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University of Illinois College of Medicine - Rockford, Dr. Rodriguez will lead a panel discussion on breast cancer and reconstructive surgery with other members of the OSF Saint Anthony oncology team during a free seminar at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10 at the UIC Health Sciences Campus, 1601 Parkview Avenue, Rockford.