

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. 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.