



meet the physician

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You are a pioneer in the field of plastic & reconstructive surgery, most notably having performed the first face transplant in the United States and the first bilateral upper extremity transplantation in the Northeast. For patients cared for at Smilow Cancer Hospital, what current research will bring new innovation to our operating rooms?

There are many areas of cancer reconstruction where innovation is leading care. New indications, new technologies, and new problems all translate into plastic surgery practice and drive innovation in our field. To name one, soon Smilow Cancer Hospital will launch a new program in lymphatic surgery to help patients who have developed lymphedema as a complication of their cancer treatment. In addition, our plastic surgeons are here to support new programs, such as the oncologic spinal surgery team. We are an active part of the multidisciplinary teams taking care of patients with cancer. Whether it is a new clinical trial or a new technology, we are here to support the care of our patients throughout their treatment.

There are many options available for women needing breast reconstruction. How do you help your patients determine the best type of reconstruction for them?

There are many options and as I tell my patients, there is typically no one right or wrong choice. Everyone has to decide based on their personal preferences and stage of their life, and we as physicians can provide insight from the perspective

of future cancer treatment, patient's body physique, and other factors. Smilow Cancer Hospital has organized webinars to provide updates on breast cancer treatment and care, including reconstructions, and we are organizing pre-operative information sessions to connect new patients with those that went through the process in the past.

The final plan for each patient is a result of dialogue between the patient's physicians and the patient, where both sides learn more about the other one's perspective. Patients should feel well informed prior to making their final decision.

Planning for reconstructive surgery is a multidisciplinary effort. How do you and your colleagues integrate into the team of medical, surgical, and radiation oncologists and other specialists delivering patient care?

This is where Smilow is truly unique. Most of the time, our entire multidisciplinary team is in the same location during patient appointments and evaluation, and communication and conferencing together occurs in real time. We are working on an even better and more seamless system for the near future. COVID has put some restraints on our physical space, but as the pandemic is diminishing, our ability to bring our teams back together will improve. Our multidisciplinary team is growing in all disciplines, including plastic surgery. We are focused on the diversity of our faculty to reflect the diversity of the patient population we help to take care of. Patients are in good hands at Smilow!