



MEDICAL POLICY STATEMENT

TrueCare

Policy Name & Number	Date Effective
Breast Reconstruction Surgery-TrueCare-MM-1474	05/01/2026
Policy Type	
MEDICAL	

Medical Policy Statements are derived from literature based on and supported by clinical guidelines, nationally recognized utilization and technology assessment guidelines, other medical management industry standards, and published MCO clinical policy guidelines. Medically necessary services include, but are not limited to, those health care services or supplies that are proper and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of disease, illness, or injury and without which the patient can be expected to suffer prolonged, increased, or new morbidity, impairment of function, dysfunction of a body organ or part, or significant pain and discomfort. These services meet the standards of good medical practice in the local area, are the lowest cost alternative, and are not provided mainly for the convenience of the member or provider. Medically necessary services also include those services defined in any Evidence of Coverage or Certificate of Coverage documents, Medical Policy Statements, Provider Manuals, Member Handbooks, and/or other plan policies and procedures.

Medical Policy Statements do not ensure an authorization or payment of services. Please refer to the plan contract (often referred to as the Evidence of Coverage or Certificate of Coverage) for the service(s) referenced in the Medical Policy Statement. Except as otherwise required by law, if there is a conflict between the Medical Policy Statement and the plan contract, then the plan contract will be the controlling document used to make the determination.

According to the rules of Mental Health Parity Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA), coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of a behavioral health disorder will not be subject to any limitations that are less favorable than the limitations that apply to medical conditions as covered under this policy.

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A. Subject**Breast Reconstruction Surgery****B. Background**

With an estimated 279,000 new cases yearly, breast cancer continues to be the leading cause of new cancer among women in the United States and a leading cause of cancer death. Breast reconstruction is intended to reduce post-mastectomy complications and improve quality of life following breast cancer surgery. Breast reconstruction procedures may include breast reduction, breast augmentation with FDA-approved breast implants, nipple reconstruction (including surgery, tattooing, or both), and breast contouring. Reconstruction may be performed immediately following a mastectomy or can be delayed for weeks or years until the member has undergone radiation, chemotherapy, or decides that reconstruction is wanted.

Breast augmentation with an FDA-approved implant can be performed in one stage, during which the implant is inserted during the same surgical visit as the mastectomy, or in two stages using an implanted tissue expander in the first stage followed by removal of the expander and insertion of the permanent breast implant. Complications may occur from breast implants immediately postoperatively or years later and can include exposure, extrusion, infection, contracture, rupture, and/or pain. Clinically significant complications may require implant removal.

Autologous tissue/muscle breast flap reconstruction is a safe and effective alternative to breast implants. Muscle, subcutaneous tissue, and skin can be transposed from the donor site either locally (eg, latissimus dorsi myocutaneous [LD] flap, pedicled transverse rectus abdominus myocutaneous [TRAM] flap) or distally (eg, free TRAM flap, deep inferior epigastric perforator [DIEP] flap, superficial inferior epigastric artery perforator [SIEP] flap, inferior or superior gluteal flap, superior gluteal artery perforator flap, Reubens flap, transverse upper gracilis [TUG] flap). The choice of procedure can be affected by the member's age and health, contralateral breast size and shape, personal preference, and expertise of the surgeon.

Individuals may also select non-invasive options, such as mastectomy bras and external breast prostheses.

C. Definitions

- **Breast Conserving Surgery (Lumpectomy, Partial Mastectomy)** – Surgical removal of tumor and small amount of surrounding breast tissue.
- **Contralateral Breast** – Unaffected/nonsurgical breast.
- **Cosmetic Procedures** – Procedures completed to improve appearance and self-esteem and to reshape normal structures of the body.
- **Mastectomy** – Surgical removal of one or both breasts.

D. Policy

- I. Breast reconstruction is not gender specific.

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

II. Surgical Options

TrueCare considers breast reconstruction medically necessary when **ANY** of the following clinical indications apply:

- A. following outlined criteria in MCG S-862 *Mastectomy, Complete, with Insertion of Breast Prosthesis or Tissue Expander*
- B. following outlined criteria in MCG S-864 *Mastectomy, Complete, with Tissue Flap Reconstruction*
- C. congenital deformities affecting the member’s physical and psychological well-being
- D. severe fibrocystic breast disease that limits the member’s function
- E. unintentional trauma or injuries
- F. complications after breast surgery for non-malignant conditions (eg, pain, irritation, bleeding, discharge, complications causing difficulty with lactation)

III. TrueCare considers treatment of physical complications, including lymphedema, following breast reconstruction medically necessary. Please see the *Women’s Health and Cancer Rights Act (WHCRA)* at www.cms.gov for more information.

IV. Surgical Exclusions:

- A. TrueCare does not cover any breast reconstruction procedures that are considered experimental, investigational, or unproven for this indication.
- B. TrueCare does not cover:
 - 1. procedures that are considered cosmetic in nature, including natural changes due to aging and weight loss/gain.
 - 2. lipectomy for donor site symmetry.
 - 3. suction lipectomy or ultrasonically assisted suction lipectomy (liposuction) for correction of surgically induced donor site asymmetry (eg, trunk or extremity) that results from one or more flap breast reconstruction procedures.

V. Non-Surgical Alternatives

TrueCare covers external breast prostheses and mastectomy bras following mastectomy or breast conserving surgery. All other indications are considered not medically necessary.

VI. Breast reconstruction with free flap procedures, regardless of technique, applies to CPT code 19364.

E. Conditions of Coverage

N/A

F. Related Policies/Rules

N/A

G. Review/Revision History

DATE		ACTION
Date Issued	02/21/2025	New market. Approved at Committee.

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

Date Revised	02/11/2026	Review: revised section D.II to reference MCG for clarity of all indications. Updated references.
Date Effective	05/01/2026	
Date Archived		

H. References

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The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

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Independent medical review –04/2019

Approved by DOM 4/14/2025