

1 Starting a New Breast Surgical Procedure

Introducing a new surgical procedure to the breast service is always challenging. So here are some tips before you start on the journey:

- Assess the need for this procedure in your service, check retrospective audit/data of your hospital/unit.
- Assess local resources in the hospital and make sure it is feasible to introduce this procedure.
- Literature review and check national guidelines related to the procedure, and attend conferences.
- Discuss with your department and relevant specialities in the hospital the impact of introducing this procedure on workload, theatre time, etc.
- Apply for appropriate approvals (R&D, Ethics, etc.) if planning a research trial/audit or funding.
- Attend courses/workshops/cadaveric courses to learn the procedure.
- Watch operative videos online.
- Observer posts in specialised units who regularly performs such procedures.
- Get used to the anatomy while doing routine procedures like mastectomy and sentinel node biopsy (SNB)/axillary node clearance (ANC).
- Set up local guidelines, indications and contraindications for the procedure.
- Write a protocol and patient selection criteria document.
- **Multidisciplinary team:** Explain to your team the new procedure and its impact on the service.
- Prepare special consent forms and patient information booklets.
- Create a photo album (print/digital) for patients to see pre- and post-operative results.
- **Theatre coordination:** Arrange staff training and purchase new relevant equipment.
- Explain ward staff about the procedure and post-operative care.
- Video record in theatre (with appropriate consent) for future academic presentations.
- Technical consideration (two surgeons for the first few cases, joint procedures).
- Keep audit of the impact of change in practice and the new procedure on the service.
- Use PROMs (patient-reported outcome measures) questionnaire to record patient's experience and functional outcome, quality of life and cosmesis.
- Develop a network of surgeons/units in the local area who are interested in starting similar procedures and arrange meetings to discuss.
- Keep a long-term follow-up with these patients and arrange 'quality-of-life questionnaire' study.
- Publish your experience, audit when you have done enough cases.
- Organise training for trainees and other surgeons once the procedure is established.