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Cancer patients can restore breast via cosmetic surgery

HERALD NEWS DESK

PANJIM, FEB 5 — Great strides have been made in the treatment of breast cancer. Newer medicines including genetically engineered antibodies, more refined radiation techniques and advances in surgical technique. All these have resulted in longer survival of those afflicted with breast cancer. Gene therapy and gene modification are future therapies that can prevent cancer formation in those who are prone to it.

Longer survival and improved quality of life have made restoration of breast shape important in the comprehensive care of breast cancer patients.

The number of women seeking breast restoration is increasing day by day due to many factors like increase in the incidence of breast cancer, improved defection rates of breast cancer, early cancer detection and improved survival; wider range of breast reconstruction options, longer survival periods and "near-cures" - making patients think about their body shape and increase in number of breast conserving resections.

Autologous or "own" tissue is the

preferred option in most breast restoration surgeries. This could be achieved by many means-transferring blocks of tissue by microsurgery, tissue expansion and fat transfer. Fat transfer is probably the ideal option in people who have undergone lumpectomies or partial breast resections.

Fat transfer for breast restoration can be done as a day care surgery with quick recovery. Although this is not a substitute for microsurgery as in complete breast reconstruction, fat transfer and stem cell therapy have a definite and positive role in post-cancer reconstruction.

Cosmetic Surgeon and President of Indian Society of Cosmetic Surgery, Dr Mohan Thomas says, "Near normal look and feel can be achieved by minimal access or key-hole method. Addition of stem cells to the fat cells increase the long term results. Interestingly, stem cells can be harvested from fatty tissue by a special process."