Ernst Wertheim Encyclopedia Article

Ernst Wertheim

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Ernst Wertheim

1864-1920

German physician who performed the first radical mastectomy in the early part of the twentieth century. This surgical procedure, which involves removing the entire breast and portions of surrounding tissue, remains one of the preferred treatments for breast cancer because it removes not only the affected tissue, but also removes nearby tissues that often become the sites of metastases, leading to further complications. By pioneering this technique, Wertheim took one of the first steps towards an effective breast cancer treatment.