

## Andrea's Story

### Age 44, Immediate Full Muscle Reconstruction

"When I first found out that I had breast cancer, I was pretty devastated. I was very young, 36 years old, and not quite prepared to deal with that. Fortunately, my sister is a plastic surgeon, so my first attempt to reach out was to call her.

I first heard about the breast reconstruction options probably in the first week or so following my diagnosis. At that time, we set up appointments with all of the doctors that we needed to see. Amongst those was a plastic surgeon. I actually saw two plastic surgeons and discussed my options at some length at that time.

For me it was very difficult. And my sister said to me, 'If you can't wrap your head around that right now, just have the lumpectomy. Get the cancer out and then you can take your time and decide do you want to have the mastectomy. Do you want to have reconstruction then or do you want to wait until later?'

So that's ultimately what I did. I started with the lumpectomy. I had my chemotherapy. I went to my support group. I saw a therapist so that by the time I had the mastectomies, by the time I opted for immediate reconstruction, I felt comfortable with the decision that I made. I was reconstructed following bilateral mastectomies with silicone implants and full muscle coverage.

Most importantly what it's done for me, everything that I've been through is that I am here and I am alive, and I have to say that several months prior to my diagnosis, my husband and I had just started trying to have a family and that obviously was put on hold as a result of my diagnosis and my subsequent treatment and the advice of doctors who said that it might not be such a good idea, given my history, to have a family.

I am here. I am alive, and I have beautiful three-and-a-half-year-old twins who I might not have had otherwise. So that is the ultimate gift that I'm here. I have a husband who loves me. He doesn't care what my breasts look like. I have, as I have said before to my friends and family, a reasonable facsimile of what I should look like and I have a beautiful family.

I tell women all the time, you have to know yourself. You have to know your history. You have to know your goals and you have to know what is right for you. And you have to be an advocate for yourself. And if you feel in your heart that you need certain action taken, you need to push for that action for yourself."

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Important Information: Every patient is different and their reconstruction options and their results may vary. All depictions on the site are for illustration purposes only. Whether or not you have breast reconstruction is a decision you need to make in consultation with your physician. Only you and your physician can determine the best option for you. Please ask your doctor to explain the benefits and risk of various reconstruction options and whether they are right for you.

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