

# Advanced post-mastectomy breast reconstruction improves women's psychosocial and sexual well-being

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After a mastectomy, women who undergo breast reconstruction with tissue from their own abdomen experience significant gains in psychological, social, and sexual wellbeing as soon as three weeks after surgery. That is one of the conclusions of a new study published early online in *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society. The study's results provide new information to breast cancer survivors who are contemplating these types of breast reconstruction procedures.

The goal of breast reconstruction after a mastectomy is to restore the appearance of the breast and to improve women's [psychological health](#) after [cancer treatment](#). But how successful is it? Recent studies on the health and wellbeing of women who undergo breast reconstruction have generated mixed findings.

To provide a clearer picture of women's mental and physical health following two advanced forms of breast reconstruction, Toni Zhong, MD, MHS, of the University Health Network Breast Restoration Program at the University of Toronto in collaboration with her colleagues at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City surveyed 51 women undergoing free MS-TRAM or DIEP flap reconstruction between June 2009 and November 2010. During these procedures, which are gaining popularity in North America and Europe, surgeons take tissue from the patient's abdomen and use it to reconstruct

the breast. The women in the study completed questionnaires prior to surgery and following surgery at three weeks and three months.

Women who underwent the breast reconstruction procedures reported significant improvements in psychological, social, and sexual wellbeing just three weeks after surgery. Unfortunately, however, they continued to experienced decreased physical wellbeing at the abdominal location where tissue was removed at three months following surgery.

The results may be helpful to [breast cancer survivors](#) who are considering breast reconstruction. "In the current healthcare environment where patients and providers increasingly seek evidence-based data to guide clinical decisions, discussing satisfaction outcomes with patients will help them make educated decisions about [breast reconstruction](#)," said Dr. Zhong. "Our study can serve as an important source of evidence to guide the decision-making process for both surgeons and patients," she added.

Provided by Wiley

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