

Most breast cancer patients do not have breast reconstruction surgery

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Only seven per cent of female breast cancer patients opt for breast reconstruction surgery.

Dr. Melinda Musgrave is determined to find out why.

"Reconstruction has a very positive effort on these women as they go through their breast cancer journey," said Dr. Musgrave, a [plastic surgeon](#) at St. Michael's Hospital. "The problem is that it's still seen as cosmetic or unnecessary and it needs to be brought into the correct light."

Other reasons women don't get reconstruction range from doctor's [misconceptions](#) that it affects a women's risk of cancer recurring, to patient concerns that having reconstruction makes them appear vain or is too much of a psychological hurdle after their last operation to remove their cancer, she said.

The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation recently awarded Dr. Musgrave \$188,180 to explore these factors over two years, specifically whether physician attitudes play a role in women's decision-making about reconstruction.

Dr. Musgrave hopes to draw attention to the benefits of reconstructive surgery today at an event at St. Michael's that is part of National [Breast Reconstruction](#) Awareness (BRA) Day – an initiative designed to promote education, awareness and access for women who may wish to

consider post-mastectomy breast reconstruction.

BRA Day will be celebrated by reconstructive surgeons across the country at their respective hospitals. Today at St. Michael's, women can see what options they have to restore their breast after surgery, participate in an interactive lecture about the key questions in [reconstructive surgery](#) and hear four of Dr. Musgrave's patients talk about their breast cancer journey and their decision to have reconstruction.

One young patient will tell her story of how after having a mastectomy, breast reconstruction and chemo, she was able to have a baby.

BRA Day organizer say their vision is that prior to undergoing [breast cancer](#) treatment, all women will be offered information about the options for reconstructive breast surgery and be provided access to breast reconstruction in a safe and timely manner.

Provided by St. Michael's Hospital

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