

New survey: Women want to see breast reconstruction results before cancer surgery

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Mastectomy patient Kim Sport is not shy about showing breast cancer patients the results of her surgery. "I don't want them to just have to look at a photo. I want to show them what reconstruction really looks like," Sport said. Credit: Courtesy: American Society of Plastic Surgeons

A new survey released today by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) shows that 89 percent of women want to see what breast reconstruction surgery results would look like before undergoing treatment for breast cancer, prompting the world's largest group of board-certified plastic surgeons to launch a landmark show-and-tell event as part of Breast Reconstruction Awareness (BRA) Day USA, October 17, 2012 in New Orleans.

"We are going to provide information in a way that's never been done

before on this level," said ASPS President Malcolm Z. Roth. "A group of [breast reconstruction](#) patients will show a group of [breast cancer](#) patients what their reconstruction choices look like. This is something that until now has been a taboo topic, and we want to give these [women](#) a forum to get the information they need."

Many breast cancer patient organizations report that a majority of women want to go beyond the usual routine of looking at before and after photos, to actually seeing the real results of various breast reconstruction procedures, in person, and having a chance to discuss those results with [breast cancer survivors](#) who've had the procedure.

"It is our job as doctors to fully inform our patients about breast reconstruction options," said Dr. Roth. "Women are telling us that they want to actually see what reconstruction results would look like beforehand, and as their physicians we need to do everything we can to honor their request."

The survey, conducted by [Harris Interactive](#), also found:

- Less than a quarter (23%) of women know the wide range of breast reconstruction options available.
- Only 22% of women are familiar with the quality of outcomes that can be expected.
- Only 19% of women understand that the timing of their treatment for breast cancer and the timing of their decision to undergo reconstruction greatly impacts their options and results.

Not only are some women never shown breast reconstruction surgery results, but previous research shows 7 out of 10 women diagnosed with breast cancer are never even told about their breast reconstruction options.

Kim Sport, who survived two battles with breast cancer, had a mastectomy and breast reconstruction at the same time and is passionate about educating other women who are facing breast cancer.

"I feel that it is very important to share my experience with other women because I don't want them to just have to look at a photo. I want to show them what reconstruction really looks like," said Sport, who has shared her reconstruction results with small groups of [breast cancer patients](#) and looks forward to raising awareness in a bigger way on BRA Day.

ASPS Member Surgeon Frank DellaCroce, MD, who performed Kim's reconstruction, believes that plastic surgeons should be a crucial part of any breast cancer patient's team of caregivers.

"I see a great number of patients who come in and say 'I wish I'd known about certain reconstruction options beforehand. I wish I could turn back the clock.' But the problem is, you can't turn back the clock," said Dr. DellaCroce, who founded the Center for Restorative Breast Surgery in New Orleans along with ASPS Member Surgeon Scott Sullivan, MD.

The ASPS and [The Plastic Surgery Foundation](#) are launching BRA Day USA to kick off a new campaign to raise awareness about breast reconstruction options. Singer/songwriter Jewel is the spokesperson for the campaign and has written the inspirational song "Flower" to raise funds for the breast reconstruction awareness efforts.

"When I was writing this song there were a lot of survivors that came to mind and I'm always continually amazed at how resilient women are, and how when faced with a difficult position they find the courage to say, 'I am going to fight on and I'm even going to be better.' And that's what made me want to write this song," said Jewel.

Beginning today, Jewel's song is available for download on the iTunes

Store. Jewel will also perform a charitable concert on October 29, 2012 in [New Orleans](#) during [Plastic Surgery The Meeting](#). Event proceeds will be donated to the Breast Reconstruction Awareness Fund of The Plastic Surgery Foundation and be used to support national and local breast reconstruction organizations.

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