

Identical twins share breast cancer, rare surgery

November 15 2013, by Lindsey Tanner



This Monday, Nov. 11, 2013 photo shows identical twins Kristen Maurer, left, and Kelly McCarthy at Kelly's mother-in-law's house in Beecher, Ill. The 34-year-old sisters from Crown Point, Ind., have shared a lot in their lives so when Kelly was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011, she urged Kristen to get tested, too. Kristen also was diagnosed with breast cancer. Now the twins are sharing a medical rarity: Kristen donated skin and fat tissue for Kelly's breast reconstruction surgery that was performed at the University of Chicago Medical Center by breast cancer surgeon, Dr. David Song on Tuesday, Nov. 12. (AP Photo/M. Spencer Green)

(AP)—Identical twins who both had breast cancer are recovering after rare reconstruction surgery at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

Surgeons used one sister's abdominal [tissue](#) to create a breast for her twin. There have only been a handful of [breast](#) reconstruction surgeries using donated tissue from an identical twin. The sisters are from Crown Point, Ind., and at age 34 they're among the youngest.

Kelly McCarthy got the tissue from her twin Kristen Maurer. They've always been close, but now Kelly says she feels even closer because her twin's tissue is implanted over her heart.



This Monday, Nov. 11, 2013 photo shows identical twin and cancer survivor Kelly McCarthy at her mother-in-law's house in Beecher, Ill., with her niece Finley, left, and son, Grey. Kelly and her sister Kristen Maurer, both from Crown Point, Ind., who both had breast cancer are recovering after rare reconstruction surgery Nov. 12 at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

Surgeons used Kristen's abdominal tissue to create a breast for her twin Kelly. There have only been a handful of breast reconstruction surgeries using donated tissue from an identical twin. (AP Photo/M. Spencer Green)

Since the twins are identical, the tissue transplanted Tuesday was a perfect genetic match. And that eliminates the need for anti-rejection medicine.

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