

More women having reconstruction surgery after breast cancer treatment

October 3 2014



Study finds notable rise in number of women once considered at high risk for the procedure.

(HealthDay)—A growing number of breast cancer patients in the United States are having breast reconstruction surgery immediately after breast removal (mastectomy), a new study shows.

This steady increase over the past 15 years is especially notable among women who were once considered too high-risk for [breast reconstruction](#) surgery, including those aged 65 and older, those who have had radiation therapy and those who had advanced [breast cancer](#) or co-existing health problems such as obesity or diabetes.

The findings suggest that surgeons and patients have increased confidence in breast reconstruction surgery, said the researchers. Data

from the study came from more than one million [breast cancer patients](#) who had a mastectomy between 1998 and 2011.

Breast reconstruction can be done with saline or silicone [implants](#), or the patient's own abdominal tissue. Among high-risk patients, breast reconstruction with implants rose 14 percent and the use of a patient's own abdominal tissue rose 10 percent over 15 years. That's according to the study from the October issue of the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*.

"Implants provide a very simple and straightforward method of reconstruction compared with using one's own abdominal tissues," lead investigator Dr. Evan Matros, assistant professor of surgery and health outcomes research in the department of surgery, division of plastic and reconstructive surgery, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, said in a journal news release.

"One reason why we think implants are a good solution in high-risk patients is that, in the case of a failure, the surgeon simply removes the implant. If a patient has a complication after abdominal tissue reconstruction, it's a much lengthier problem and more difficult to deal with," Matros said.

Reconstruction surgery with implants is less invasive, takes less time and offers patients a faster recovery.

The overall success rate for breast [reconstruction](#) surgery in high-risk patients is 88 percent, but they still have higher complication rates than low-risk [patients](#), the study authors noted.

More information: The American Cancer Society has more about [breast reconstruction after mastectomy](#).

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Citation: More women having reconstruction surgery after breast cancer treatment (2014, October 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-women-reconstruction-surgery-breast-cancer.html>

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