

# Emerging from mastectomy

November 10 2017, by From Mayo Clinic News Network, Mayo Clinic News Network

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When she was diagnosed with breast cancer, Margaret Pelikan had two goals: to get rid of the disease and to feel normal afterward. Her team at Mayo Clinic helped her accomplish both.

For eight years, Margaret Pelikan dreaded mammograms.

In 2008, she had been diagnosed with a condition called lobular carcinoma in situ in her left breast. The disorder involves abnormal cell growth, and it increases a person's risk of developing [invasive breast cancer](#) in both breasts.

After having the [abnormal cells](#) surgically removed, Margaret took medication to suppress her estrogen production in hopes of decreasing her [breast cancer risk](#). But in 2016, her fears were realized. A mammogram showed she had suspicious calcifications in her right breast. Further testing revealed Margaret had breast cancer.

Her local health care provider recommended a lumpectomy and radiation therapy. She went ahead with the lumpectomy. But she was concerned about radiation. Because she was at high-risk for [breast cancer](#), Margaret feared the disease could come back. If it did, a mastectomy and successful breast reconstruction could be more difficult to achieve if the tissue had received radiation.

As Margaret weighed her options, she decided she wanted another opinion. She turned to Mayo Clinic. Doctors there offered Margaret a

new type of surgery and breast reconstruction that would provide the treatment she needed while helping her maintain a positive outlook about her body.

"I joke that I look better than I did before," Margaret says. "And I don't have to continue to live in fear of my annual mammogram."

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Citation: Emerging from mastectomy (2017, November 10) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-11-emerging-mastectomy.html>

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