



# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Reconstructing Lives After Breast Cancer

(NAPSA)—The recovery rate for breast cancer is 90 percent when the disease is caught early. That's significant news, considering that more than 190,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001 alone.

"This doesn't just affect women over 40," says Rachelle Gregg, who was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was 23 years old. All Gregg had on her mind, in November of 2000 was planning her wedding, which was just months away, when she found a lump on her left breast—an aggressive tumor.

Luckily for Gregg and women like her, advances in breast cancer treatments and breast reconstruction have returned them to health with hopeful futures.

Similarly, Kathy Calkins-Alioto was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was 33. Alioto was devastated to learn that a lump on her right breast was cancerous and required a mastectomy.

Calkins-Alioto knew that breast reconstruction—the recreation of a breast after a mastectomy—was a big decision, but one she was comfortable making due to her young age, active life and love of the outdoors.

More than 81,000 women had breast reconstruction in 2001—a 174 percent increase in the last decade. Many doctors credit the increase—at least in part—to the passage of the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998. The law, supported by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), mandates insurance coverage for breast reconstruction and alteration of the opposite breast for symmetry for women who have undergone mastectomy.



**More breast cancer patients than ever before are choosing breast reconstruction.**

"Losing a breast can be devastating, both emotionally and physically," reports ASPS President Edward Luce, M.D. "Luckily for my patients Rachelle and Kathy and others like them, breast cancer treatment is holistic. There are multidisciplinary teams working together to give patients the best options available. This approach lets women know that reconstruction is available after mastectomy."

Discussion about breast reconstruction can start immediately after diagnosis. Typically, plastic surgeons make breast reconstruction recommendations based on patient's age, health, anatomy, tissues and goals.

For more information on breast reconstruction or to find a plastic surgeon certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery, visit the Web site [www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org) or call 1-888-4-PLASTIC.