

Pensacola doctor performs reconstructive surgery for breast cancer survivors

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Pensacola's newest microsurgeon provides new lease on life to breast cancer survivors.

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Dr. Ashley Chandler (left) began focusing on microsurgery to provide women in Pensacola with innovative reconstructive breast procedures. (Photo: Ben Brown Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery)

Medical advances have made the chances of overcoming breast cancer skyrocket, but the lasting effects of these treatments sometimes leave patients feeling like a lesser version of who they once were. For those facing reconstructive surgery, there is now microsurgical breast reconstruction available on the Gulf Coast thanks to [Ben Brown Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery's](#) newest surgeon, Ashley R. Chandler, MD.

The most advanced form of breast reconstruction available today, this technique, which involves free flap surgery or removing tissue from one part of the body by disconnecting the vessels and reconnecting them in another, has just recently emerged in the area with Dr. Ben Brown and Dr. Chandler at the helm.

Dr. Chandler, a native of Pensacola, attended medical school at Florida State University, graduating at the top of her class. Dr. Chandler was accepted to a six-year integrated plastic surgery residency in New York, where she trained under a multitude of world-renowned plastic surgeons.

After her residency, Dr. Chandler opted to pursue an additional one-year fellowship in Michigan under Dennis Hammond, MD, one of the world's most recognized and respected authorities in aesthetic and reconstructive surgery of the breast. It was there she learned techniques developed by Dr. Hammond that has allowed her to become one of the leading breast surgeons on the Gulf Coast.

Dr. Chandler returned home to Pensacola after her fellowship and found to follow her

dream of pursuing microsurgical breast reconstruction in her hometown. "I was doing general surgery with Robert Rubey, MD here in Pensacola during medical school, and I cared for a post-op patient who had free flap reconstruction microsurgery in New Orleans. The patient had to travel because this particular surgery wasn't an option here in Pensacola, so I turned my focus to microsurgery so that I could provide women in my home town with this innovative technique," Chandler said.

Dr. Chandler studied the procedure where the tissue is most commonly taken from the abdomen area, much like a tummy tuck. This is called a DIEP (deep inferior epigastric perforator) flap. Once the blood vessel is disconnected in the pelvic area, a small piece of rib cartilage is removed to expose a blood vessel in the chest wall, and the pelvic vessel is then reattached to the chest vessel using microscopic surgical equipment. The surgeon is now able to work with ample tissue to reconstruct a natural, soft breast.

This procedure is ideal for patients who have undergone radiation therapy, as around 50% of those patients are not ideal for breast implant surgery due to capsular contracture or wounds that can develop after radiation. Dr. Chandler said other ideal candidates for DIEP flap surgery are larger women who require implants larger than 800cc.

"As of now, implants are not made large enough to accommodate these patients, so the DIEP flap procedure provides enough excess tissue to create a sizable breast to fit their body," Dr. Chandler said.

The DIEP flap procedure also preserves all the abdominal muscles. Saving the abdominal muscles means patients experience less pain, enjoy a faster recovery, maintain their core strength long-term and have a lower risk of abdominal complications.

According to Dr. Chandler, "Women have a right to feel confident about their bodies, especially after breast cancer. Being unhappy with your breast is not something vain. As women, it affects our emotional well-being and overall sense of femininity. Breast surgery can be life-changing, and I am proud to be able to help the women in my hometown get a part of their life back that cancer has taken away."

Ashley Chandler, MD and Ben Brown, MD are the only microsurgical breast reconstructive experts in the area. To contact Dr. Chandler to discuss your options for microsurgical breast reconstruction, call [Ben Brown Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery](#), located at 600 E. Government Street in downtown Pensacola, at 850-972-0542.

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