

Jessica's Story

In 2004, when I was 35, my doctor felt strongly that women living on Long Island were at an increased risk for breast cancer, so I had my baseline mammogram that year. I had the next in 2008 and then again 2009. I was told to come back for a follow up six months later in June 2010. Busy with my husband and our three children I did not schedule an appointment until around Christmas of 2010. It was during that December 28 visit, at age 41, that a wonderful pathologist showed me dozens of tiny, scattered calcifications throughout the ducts of my left breast. "You will live to be 93 but will not take those breasts with you," he said. He asked me to come back the next day for a core needle biopsy.

I remember laying in that room waiting and hearing a nurse crying on the phone with her daughter, sadly telling the story of a young mother about to find out she had cancer. It took a minute to realize she was talking about me!!! Two days later the pathologist called me with the results, it was definitely high grade DCIS, stage 0-1. With warmth and compassion he gave me three well known and respected surgeons in my area and told me he had already spoken with them and they were expecting my call. Looking back those early days were lived in a haze. I had to tell my husband I was sick and could die. We told our children, then ages 17, 11, and nine. My husband went to the first appointment in January 2011 with me. The second I went alone. I never made it to the third doctor because the first one won me over with her manner, compassion, strength, approach, and her understanding of me and my needs. Even then my kids came first. I could not have asked for a better surgeon and breast team!!

On February 21, 2011, I had a double mastectomy with expanders. In June 2011, four days after my sons high school graduation I had my implant exchange, followed by 6 weeks of a terrible infection. After that, I decided no more doctors or poking and prodding, cutting and stitching, so no nipples for me. But after much thought and input from my closest friends and my husband, I decided to go for it and in April 2012 I had nipple reconstruction. I was released from my oncologists care in April after a full blood work-up showed all my levels to be perfect. My surgeon sees me every April and August was my last visit with my plastic surgeon. Aside from feeling the loss of their care and watchful eyes, I am happy, healthy and cancer free for over two years!!!