

MEDICAL MATTERS



BREAST RECONSTRUCTION: DR. MICHAEL DIAZ IS WORKING TO RECONSTRUCT THE SOUL

Breast cancer is a disease that strikes at the very core of womanhood. The effects of losing one of the symbols of femininity are profound and serve as a daily reminder of one of the most painful and challenging experiences of a woman's life. The breast cancer survivor not only loses her breast but is at risk of losing her sense of self and part of her soul. The successful treatment of this disease requires a team approach which includes a general surgeon, medical oncologist, and a radiation oncologist who work to eradicate the disease and keep it at bay. It is at this point where Dr. Diaz's work as the plastic and reconstructive surgeon begins to restore not only the physical void but the emotional ones as well.

"My goal is to return the patient back to day zero, the day before she was diagnosed and her life changed forever." By reconstructing the breast, not only are the visual cues of a breast reestablished, it also removes physical reminders of the disease, allowing survivors to recover psychologically and emotionally from this traumatic experience. Because breast reconstruction requires multiple steps it is critical that not only the patient's physical needs are tended to but their emotional and social needs as well.

Dr. Diaz and his office staff recognize the importance of support from family and friends and include them in the plan of care. "Our patients are urged to participate in support groups such as Breast Friends of Florida. As a sitting board member, I embrace their partnership for the support and services they provide. We communicate closely with the patient's primary care physician and specialists, preserving the team approach to care. Our patients know that we maintain an open door policy who find comfort when they just need someone to listen to."

"The diagnosis of breast cancer can initially overwhelm a patient who feels she does not have the strength to endure this challenge. I have found that many patients discover the internal fortitude necessary for this journey through the love and support of those around them including family, friends, and their physicians. Breast reconstruction is an endeavor that combines compassion, understanding and surgical skill to bring about complete healing. Once the patient is brought back to day zero, they begin their lives physically and spiritually renewed."



Dr. Diaz, with patient Carol Roberts, maintains a team approach to care with his patients' primary care physician, medical oncologist and radiation oncologist.

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AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Visit www.cancer.org to learn more about breast cancer, managing the cancer experience, understanding your treatment options, find local support groups and more.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

INFORMATION

- Talk to a trained cancer information specialist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (800) ACS-2345 for information, support and community resources.

HELP

- Transportation assistance to and from treatment.
- Find a place to stay when traveling for treatment.
- Techniques to help restore appearance and self-image during treatment.
- Medical information and special products for women with breast cancer.

SUPPORT

- One on one support from trained breast cancer survivors.
- Online educational classes for patients and their families.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY OF BREVARD COUNTY

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