

May 2015 was when I got the call, I was BRCA 1 positive. I don't remember being afraid. I was stunned. This kind of thing couldn't happen to me, right?

Looking for guidance, I made appointments with my doctor and family practitioner. I was done having children so having my tubes and ovaries out was an easy decision. My breasts, on the other hand, were part of my femininity. It took me much longer to come to terms with having a bilateral mastectomy with immediate reconstruction.

At my next follow-up appointment, I was encouraged to meet with a plastic surgeon to see what my reconstruction options would be. I scheduled an appointment and from that moment I knew this was what I needed to do. It had taken about a year to come to terms with this decision. My LBP sisters, who had gone through the same surgeries, were a wealth of comfort and support.

I had some sense of loss right after the surgery but it quickly turned to looking ahead to the future the surgery has afforded me. I am still currently in reconstruction but nearing completion soon.

I have learned through this journey, that I want to live this life and I am tougher than I thought.

~Shelly Novak
Erie, PA