

Utah Valley Plastic Surgery

PLASTIC SURGERY

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A Micro Solution to Reconstruction

Dr. Elise Mecham adds microsurgery specialist to the local breast cancer reconstruction team at Utah Surgical Associates in Provo

When **Cassy Short of West Jordan**

found out she carried a BRCA gene that greatly increased her chance of developing breast cancer, she opted for a double mastectomy and an eventual reconstructive breast surgery.

For the reconstruction surgery, she was referred to Dr. Elise Mecham with Utah Valley Plastic Surgery.

"I was so impressed with Dr. Mecham," Cassy says. "In fact, my mom came up from Arizona to support me at one of my pre-surgery visits and told me that if she needed surgery, she was going to drive up and have Dr. Mecham do it."

Dr. Mecham grew up in Utah Valley and attended Provo High and UVU. She always had an interest in science, but wanted to be a stay-at-home mom, complete with SUV and membership in the local PTA.

However, shortly after her college graduation, her husband developed an auto-immune disorder that left him unable to work consistently and that changed the couple's course.

"He suggested I pursue my interest in medicine," she says. "We decided that he would be better suited to be at home with our children and I would be able to support the family financially. It was a role-reversal that has worked well for us."

Dr. Mecham enjoyed each rotation through medical school and was somewhat surprised to find herself drawn to plastic surgery and, more specifically, microsurgery. Microsurgery utilizes a microscope to detach and reattach living tissue to a blood supply. She uses the technique to rebuild breasts, salvage limbs and reconstruct patients after cancer using tissue from the patient's own body.

Not only does Dr. Mecham enjoy the challenge of plastic surgery, but she appreciates that her perfectionism finds a healthy home in the specialty. Since she has a particular expertise in post-breast cancer reconstruction, she also works to connect emotionally with patients going through a life-altering challenge.



Dr. Elise Mecham

"I like being the silver lining," she says. "After the other surgeon removes the cancer, I get to rebuild their breasts. At times I can even enhance what they had before."

As the mother of five, she understands what her female

patients are experiencing and takes time to understand them as people — not just patients.

"I always had the time with her that I needed," Cassy says. "She made me feel like I was her only patient. I appreciated that."



Dr. Elise Mecham & family

Medical Tip

Breast reconstruction is often done with the skin and fatty tissue found on the tummy (stomach, abdomen...) Ask the plastic surgeon if microsurgical breast reconstruction is an option. It gives patients the chance to rebuild their breast and a "tummy tuck" at the same time.