

K10 Skin Cancer Reconstruction

March 2008

Intro: Remember what it was like to be a teenager? How embarrassing it was to have a blemish or a bad hair day? So imagine being 17 – a diagnosis of melanoma – and you end up with a large bald spot where the skin cancer was removed. This young lady survived that, and thanks to reconstructive surgery at Mayo Clinic she rarely has a bad hair day..

Video

Audio

Total running time 1:22

CG :00 to :05

Sara Gunsolus

Had melanoma

“I WAS BASICALLY ON THE FLOOR GOING LIKE THIS, PULLING OUT PIECES OF MY HAIR.”

SARA GUNSOLUS HAD AN AGGRESSIVE FORM OF CHILDHOOD MELANOMA, SKIN CANCER, WHICH LOOKED LIKE A LARGE A BLACK MOLE ON HER SCALP. SURGEONS AT MAYO CLINIC REMOVED IT.

CG :15 to :23

Sarvam TerKonda, M.D.

Mayo Clinic

“WE HAD TO CLOSE IT WITH A SKIN GRAFT AND THEN THE UNFORTUNATE THING FOR SARA WAS THAT IT LEFT AN AREA OF HER SCALP THAT DIDN'T HAVE HAIR. “

Standup
CG :23 to :30
Vivien Williams
Reporting

DR. SARVAM TERKONDA SAYS IT WAS A THREE-BY-FIVE INCH BALD SPOT. AND THAT'S A REALLY TOUGH THING FOR A TEENAGE GIRL TO FACE. "PRETTY MUCH THIS WHOLE AREA WAS BALD." ABOUT A YEAR LATER, AFTER RADIATION AND CHEMOTHERAPY, DR. TERKONDA AND HIS TEAM PERFORMED ANOTHER PROCEDURE TO GIVE SARA HER HAIR BACK. "WE PLACED WHAT WE CALL TISSUE EXPANDERS ADJACENT TO THE SURGICAL SITE." EXPANDERS ARE LIKE BALLOONS UNDER THE SKIN. EVERY WEEK, DR. TERKONDA INJECTED SALINE INTO THESE BALLOONS AND SLOWLY STRETCHED SARA'S SKIN. AFTER THREE MONTHS SARA WENT BACK TO SURGERY WHERE DR. TERKONDA TOOK OUT THE

EXPANDERS, REMOVED THE
SCARRED SKIN AND BROUGHT THE
STRETCHED SKIN TOGETHER –
ELIMINATING HER BALD SPOT.
“IT KIND OF FELT WEIRD HAVING
BUBBLES IN YOUR HEAD BECAUSE
THEY WERE SQUISHY.”
THERE’S STILL A SCAR UNDER
THERE, BUT SARA SAYS NOW
EVERY DAY IS A GOOD HAIR DAY.
FOR MEDICAL EDGE, I’M VIVIEN
WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

Sara has been cancer free for three years. Her plan is to finish college and become an elementary school teacher. For more information on melanoma treatment and prevention, visit our Website at...**[STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.mayoclinic.org> or voice tag "mayoclinic.org" for more information.]**