

13 SUE LEADING BX. DOC 'Lost my nipple'

By DENISE BUFFA

Thirteen patients have active malpractice suits against the head of plastic surgery at a prestigious Bronx hospital, The Post has learned.

They include a woman who claims Dr. Berish Strauch lost her nipple during breast-reduction surgery and another who says he removed her navel in a tummy tuck.

"I just hope you can save some others because this man has to be stopped," said 67-year-old Elizabeth DeCarlo of Strauch, chairman of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Montefiore.

DeCarlo said he removed so much of her skin he didn't have enough to form a belly button.

She added she's lucky she's alive — because she turned blue during the five-hour operation, which should have taken half as long.

DeCarlo suggested that Strauch, 72, pack up his medical bag.



DR. STRAUCH
Prominent plastic surgeon.

"It's finished. It's time," she said. "Come on. You can't be maiming people."

Strauch's lawyer, Frank Bastone, and a spokesman for Montefiore said they could not comment on pending litigation.

But Bastone said no jury has ever found against his client and declined to comment on whether any cases against the doctor had been settled out of court.

"Plastic surgery is a high-profile medical specialty that, by its nature, attracts unwarranted litigation and media attention," Bastone said.

"Dr. Strauch has successfully treated and helped thousands of patients. Dr. Strauch is recognized by his peers as one of the world's leading practitioners in the field of plastic and reconstructive surgery."

Lawyers who represent other patients Strauch is accused of harming said the number of medical-malpractice suits against the doctor was extraordinary.

"That's a lot of cases," said Queens attorney Harry Katz, who represents a 38-year-old woman who claims she went to Strauch in 2001 for breast-reduction surgery and came out missing the nipple on her right breast because it rejected reattachment.

Manhattan lawyer Harvey Levine and his associate, Peter Gleason, represent an 11-year-old girl, who they say went into surgery with Strauch in 2001 to have a birthmark removed — and came out looking a lot worse because the doctor put a bandage on too tight and stopped blood flow, killing tissue.

"I think this guy should be out of business," Levine said.

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