

life TO THE FULLEST



Spring 2011

*"All through the long winter, I dream of my garden.
On the first day of spring, I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth.
I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar." – Helen Hayes*

Spring is finally here and so is your Spring 2011 issue of **Life to the Fullest**, the Swedish Cancer Institute's newsletter for cancer survivors in our community. In this issue we have included articles about the importance of getting a good night's sleep, the role art therapy can play as you transition from cancer patient to cancer survivor, tips for traveling, and information about several classes that offer you opportunities to share your insights and concerns with others who are having similar experiences. We hope you will find this newsletter helpful and that you will consider sharing it with your family and friends.

The Importance of Sleep for Cancer Survivors and Caregivers

*Daniel Labriola, N.D., Director of Naturopathic Services,
Swedish Cancer Institute*

Restful sleep is a necessary ingredient for maintaining quality of life, performing activities of daily living and simply feeling well, especially for cancer survivors.

Good sleep has many benefits. It helps keep your immune system healthy and strong, and may help you in your fight with cancer.



A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book. — Irish Proverb

Inadequate sleep causes fatigue. It can interfere with mental clarity and memory, and can intensify depression or anxiety. It can even increase your pain score. Studies also have shown that individuals with compromised sleep, such as shift workers, have increased cancer incidence.

How do you know you are getting enough sleep?

Ideally, you should fall asleep within 30 minutes and sleep through until morning. If you rise to use the toilet, then you should be back asleep within 15 minutes. You should wake invigorated and alert, and not experience significant fatigue in the afternoon. There is much debate over the number of hours needed, with a range of 7 to 9.5 hours. I suggest more, rather than less.

How can you improve your sleep?

In our clinic we start by using a protocol aptly named Review of Systems to identify physical problems that can interfere with sleep, including such things as inadequate nutrition and digestive problems, pain, airway issues (including sleep apnea), and some drug


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treatments. We also review mental and emotional issues, such as anxiety and stress. We then address each issue. With each success, sleep quality improves.

You can use the same strategy by identifying those things that may be affecting your sleep, preferably with your doctor or a provider with expertise in this area. Other proven strategies you can try include:

- Avoiding stimulation, such as watching TV in bed before going to sleep
- Keeping your bedroom cool, dark and quiet
- Resolving potential disturbances, such as too many bathroom wake-ups, the cat moving on the bed or a partner's snoring.
- Reading a book or crossword puzzle as a segue to getting to sleep

Most cancer survivors can eliminate sleep difficulties without drugs, which is the most permanent and satisfying result. If you are at your wit's end, however, your doctor may provide a prescription sleep medication. I encourage you, however, to continue your quest to eliminate the causes of insomnia, rather than depend on the long-term use of medications.

Good sleep can help you be at your best with all of the activities and relationships that make life worthwhile. For cancer survivors and caregivers especially, this can mean a remarkably improved quality of life and a better long-term outcome. 


Art Therapy for Cancer Survivors

Nicole Stiver, M.A., LMHC, ATR, Patient Education and Integrated Care, Swedish Cancer Institute

Cancer diagnosis and treatment can have a life-changing effect. When you complete treatment and your focus shifts from medical interventions to your life after cancer, you may face many questions. You may wonder "What's next?" or "What do I want my life to look like?" At the same time, you might experience conflicting emotions such as resilience, fear of recurrence, hope, uncertainty, strength and grief.

Art therapy is one way to process your individual journey through cancer diagnosis and treatment, and to begin to answer some of those questions. Through art therapy, you can begin to create your life after cancer using a variety of art materials.

Art therapy is a healing modality intended to integrate emotional, physical and spiritual care by facilitating creative ways for patients to respond to their cancer experience. Art therapy provides an outlet for feelings and is a way to explore emotions that are difficult to put into words. Art therapy can help reduce stress and anxiety, and help build positive coping skills. As you create, you may experience increased relaxation, self-awareness and self-discovery. A cancer diagnosis can take away a sense of control. Creating your own art is one way to help you regain it. Through the use of art therapy, you can explore the questions that might arise, establish your priorities and create a meaningful life after cancer.

Art therapy is different from art classes in that the focus is on the creative process, rather than the art product. Confidential sessions are held one-on-one with an art therapist who will offer a variety of art materials and encourage you to find your own meaning in your art. Art experience or confidence is not required. 

Art Therapy at Swedish

- Offered for Swedish cancer patients, and their family members or caregivers at no cost.
- Family members and caregivers may come with the patient or separately.
- All one-on-one sessions with an art therapist are confidential.

For more information or to schedule an art therapy session, please call **206-215-6178**.

Exploring thoughts, feelings and emotions through art therapy.



A patient explores health concerns in this oil pastel drawing.



A pen drawing expresses both happiness and worry.



This image depicting full-body relaxation is created with a body shaped template, color pencils and markers.



In art therapy, nature is often depicted and identified as a source of peace, nurturing and feelings of spiritual connectedness, as is the case in this oil pastel.



This pastel drawing is a circle or mandala. Working in a circle can be a way for a patient to find containment and feelings of safety.



This oil pastel drawing depicts a "life path" or "cancer journey."



A collection of inspiring and pleasing images are arranged into a magazine collage.

About the Authors

Daniel Labriola, N.D., is director of Naturopathic Services at the Swedish Cancer Institute, and the director and founder of Northwest Natural Health Specialty Care Clinic in Seattle. He is a graduate of Syracuse University, and received his doctor of naturopathic medicine from



Bastyr University. He has held multiple positions in both private and public organizations to increase awareness of the role of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in patient care. He is author of the book “Complementary Cancer Therapies”. He is co-chairman of the Survivorship Task Force, which is part of the Washington State Comprehensive Cancer Control Partnership. Dr. Labriola is one of the first CAM physicians to treat patients in a hospital environment on a regular basis.

Nicole Stiver, M.A., LMHC, ATR, offers art therapy to cancer patients and their caregivers at the Swedish Cancer Institute. She received a master’s in mental health counseling and art therapy from Antioch University Seattle. Nicole has been at Swedish since 2005. She is a licensed mental health counselor and a registered art therapist. ☺



Travel Tips for Cancer Survivors

As the warmer months approach, thoughts turn to vacations with family and friends. As a cancer survivor, you may be ready to get away and have some fun – but may also have concerns about whether traveling is a good idea. Every patient and every reaction to cancer treatment is different; therefore, there is no simple response to the question, “Is it ok to travel?”. These travel tips are offered as a starting point for your decision process and preparation for travel.

- 1. Talk with your doctor.** Ask your doctor if you are well enough to travel. Ensure he/she knows your exact plans, including mode of transportation, the countries you will visit and where you will stay. Ask if there are travel restrictions. For example, your immune system may be compromised for awhile after your last treatment; therefore, airplane travel or being in large crowds may leave you vulnerable to infection.
- 2. Do some preliminary research.** Before you leave, identify medical resources you may need while away from home. Take extra medication in case your return is delayed. And, prepare a short description of your medical history so you have it available for a provider who is unfamiliar with you. It is also wise to ask your insurance administrator how the company will process claims for care you receive while you are out of town.
- 3. Plan a trip that is in sync with your energy level.** Set realistic expectations. Plan activities that you will be able to enjoy and complete without getting too tired. Build in time for relaxation – short stops in your sightseeing schedule, a mid-afternoon nap before an evening out, a morning of people-watching in a park.
- 4. Enjoy!** You are a survivor – and there’s a lot to see, do and appreciate. ☺

Celebrate — Educate — Advocate

Throughout the year, organizations host month-long celebrations intended to raise awareness about specific health topics. As survivors, family members, caregivers and health-care providers, we can help their causes – in our own, personal way.

April 1-30:

National Cancer Control Month (by proclamation of the President of the United States)

- Remind a friend or loved one about getting an over-due cancer screening
- Donate to your favorite cancer research organization
- Mail a card to a cancer survivor who could use a little boost of friendship

May 1-31:

Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month (American Academy of Dermatologists)


May 2:

Melanoma Monday

- Stock up on sun screen for you and your family for the coming summer months
- Give a sun-protection gift as a present for a baby shower (a bonnet or hat with a brim to cover face and ears, infant sunglasses or clothing with built-in sun protection)
- Buy a new gardening hat and gloves, or a hat for the beach or boating

June 5:

National Cancer Survivors Day (National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation)

- Treat yourself to something special to celebrate your survivorship or your support for a survivor (a spa day, a visit to a museum, a walk in the park, ice cream)
- Call a cancer survivor to congratulate them
- Send a thank-you note to those who have made a difference in your life 

Celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day with Swedish

The Swedish Cancer Institute will host two workshops to help celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day on Saturday, June 4.

The Anticancer Lifestyle

Speaker: Carol Robl, M.Ed., M.T.

Explore recent findings on ways to increase your resistance to cancer. Learn how to create an anti-cancer lifestyle by eating beneficial foods, protecting yourself from environmental threats, and enhancing your physical and emotional wellbeing.

Survivorship — Living With, Through and Beyond Cancer

Speaker: Sandra Johnson, LICSW


Life after a diagnosis and treatment may bring questions as to how do I live my life now. This two-hour session will explore the nature of hope, resilience and re-establishing your relationship to life.

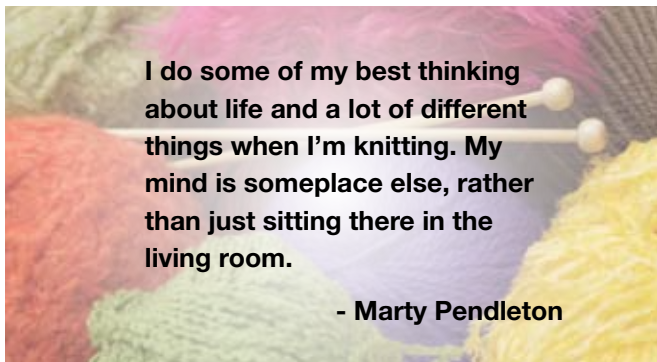
Both of these workshops will be held in the Donald A. Tesh, M.D. Conference Rooms A and B at Swedish/First Hill. Although these workshops are provided free to participants, registration is required.

Celebrate cancer survivors by attending the “2011 Life to the Fullest Workshop.” Register separately for each workshop you want to attend at www.swedish.org/classis.




Knit for Life

You are invited to join a group of volunteers who have turned knitting into a healing experience and a way to enhance the lives of cancer patients, and their families and caregivers, during treatment and recovery. On Monday evenings, from 6 to 8 p.m., the knitters gather at the hospital lobby Starbucks at Swedish/Cherry Hill (500 17th Ave., Seattle). On Tuesday afternoons, from 1 to 3 p.m., they meet in the first-floor lobby of the Swedish Cancer Institute at Swedish/First Hill (1221 Madison St., Seattle). The group offers a supportive environment for beginning and experienced knitters. There is no cost and no registration, and all supplies (needles, yarn and patterns) are provided. 




Cancer Survivors' Classes

The Swedish Cancer Institute offers several classes specific to cancer survivorship. The groups, which are open to all people in the community, provide an opportunity to meet with others having similar experiences. An experienced class facilitator leads each group. 

ACT — After Cancer Treatment: What's Next?

Join a group of patients who are preparing to live life after cancer treatment. For more information about this eight-week class, please call **206-540-0477**.

The Anticancer Lifestyle

Explore recent findings on ways to increase your resistance to cancer with health educator Carol Robl, M.Ed., M.T. Learn how to create an anti-cancer lifestyle by eating beneficial foods, protecting yourself from environmental threats, and enhancing your physical and emotional well-being. Please call **206-386-2502** to register for the next available session. 

Life after Treatment

Swedish Medical Center is again offering its three-part class, Life after Treatment, to help cancer survivors, and their friends and families face the future after treatment. This session will be held at Swedish/First Hill.


Life after Treatment (3-class series)

(Carol Robl, M.Ed., M.T.)

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| When: | May 4, 11 and 18; 6-7:30 p.m. |
| Where: | Swedish/First Hill Donald A. Tesh, M.D., Conference Rooms A and B 1221 Madison St., Seattle |
| Cost | No cost to participants |

The class is offered at no cost to participants, and includes opportunities for individuals to share their own experiences and to hear about and discuss various survivorship topics. Instructor Carol Robl, M.Ed., M.T., includes topics such as recent research on the challenges cancer survivors may face and the strategies to deal with those challenges, how to lead an “anti-cancer” lifestyle, and the process of healing the whole person.

Those who attend the class learn how to create an action plan that will help them through their transition.


For more information or to register for this class, please call **206-386-2502**. 

Fall Session of “After Breast Cancer: What’s Next?”

Registration is now being accepted for the next eight-week “After Breast Cancer: What’s Next?” class with instructor Jacci Thompson-Dodd, M.A., MSSS., which will be held Sept. 29 through Nov. 6. There are eight modules that comprise the class, including:

- 1. What now?** A time to examine the past and plan for the future
- 2. Self-care.** Uncovering barriers to a new future (fear, family demands, financial issues, etc.)
- 3. Renegotiating relationships.** Rebuilding a personal community through crucial conversations
- 4. Physical nourishment.** Beneficial foods, exercise and lifestyle changes
- 5. Intimacy.** How to feel comfortable in your own skin; rebuilding a sense of sensuality; re-engaging with a partner – or finding a new partner
- 6. Self-assessment.** An exercise to help determine what can remain the same and what must change
- 7. Creating a survivorship plan.** Using the results of the self-assessment to map the future by identifying the small steps and strides, and the leaps that will require a significant effort
- 8. Culmination.** Witnessing the progress made during the eight weeks

Through class discussions, self-assessment, journaling, and the development of vision maps and survivorship plans, Jacci leads class members through the critical transition from treatment to survivor as they learn to create a “new normal” for themselves.

For more information or to register for the class, go to www.swedish.org/classes. 

Share the News and Your Ideas

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of *Life to the Fullest* and that you will consider sharing it with your friends and family members. Anyone can join our mailing list by sending his or her name and e-mail address to full.life@swedish.org.

We also encourage you to let us know about topics you would like us to include in future issues or questions you would like answered by our experts at the Swedish Cancer Institute. Send your ideas and questions to full.life@swedish.org.