

patient
 education

Update

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS AT THE SWEDISH CANCER INSTITUTE

SUMMER 2012

Family Survivorship

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QUICK REFERENCE

American Cancer Society
 Cancer Resource Navigator
 206-215-6557

Art Therapy
 206-215-6178

Cancer Education Center
 206-386-3200

Cancer Rehabilitation
 ACTIVE Program
 206-215-6333

Hereditary Cancer Clinic
 206-215-4377

Massage Therapy
 206-215-3007

Naturopathic Services
 206-386-3015

Nutrition Care Clinic
 206-781-6228

Oncology Social Work
 206-540-0477

www.swedish.org/cancer

Who do you envision when you think of a cancer survivor? A person wearing a ribbon identifying their cancer? Or Lance Armstrong cycling his way to victory? Both are definitely cancer survivors, but there are other survivors, too. I invite you to expand your vision and think about the child standing behind that person wearing the ribbon. I will never forget my first meeting with Lily. Lily's mother was diagnosed with stage III breast cancer, and she brought Lily to see me because she had started wetting her bed. While standing talking to Lily's mother, I saw this bright red hair and a sparkling blue eye poke around her leg, checking me out. Lily's mother described her fear that she would not be here for the next Mother's Day or her daughter's birthday. Watching Lily tightly grip her mother's leg, I gulped back my own tears. I bent down and caught Lily's eye and introduced myself, reached out, and shook hands with this little girl. I saw fear and curiosity in her blue eyes. I spent the next three years with Lily and her family, watching Lily work through a wide range of emotions from anger, fear, resentment and guilt, to find peace and the ability to survive. She stopped wetting the bed after several visits to our art therapy support group and worked through her emotions in a safe way. At that time she was five years old. She is now a thriving nine year old and living well. She tells me that sometimes she is scared, but, she knows she has a lot of love and people to help her. Lily is a survivor.

According to the American Cancer Society, 25% of people diagnosed with cancer in Washington state have children under the age of 18. When a parent receives a cancer diagnosis the entire



Michelle and Maya enjoying a day at the park with Camp Sparkle.

family is thrown into crisis. As parents, we want to protect our children and spare them as much pain as possible. Our instinct as Mama and Papa Bears is to shield them from the reality of what cancer entails. Often, frightened and exhausted adults have little energy to spare for children who are themselves terrified and confused. The reality is, the entire family is affected by cancer and will all go through this journey together.

Children of cancer patients may internalize and hide their emotions and anxieties to protect the ill parent. As a result, distressed parents may underestimate, or be unaware of, the impact of cancer on their children. Many family based studies have shown that changes in the parent-child relationship and symptoms of stress and anxiety in the children of cancer patients can continue for up to five, ten or twenty years after the diagnosis.

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Children may feel a fear of being abandoned and worry about “who will take care of me.” Like Lily, children may regress developmentally, and a 5-year-old might start wetting the bed again. Others may become developmentally accelerated; they may seem more emotionally mature, but even the most mature kid is still a child inside. Children experience many different emotions and it is important they know that all feelings are okay and taken seriously. Being open and honest with your child from the beginning builds trust, enhances communication and reduces fear. In addition to experiencing less stress, children who know the truth are more likely to cooperate with family rules.

Family roles will change. Children are often given more responsibility in caregiving and functioning of the home. When the parent is well, children are expected to go back to former family roles. It is difficult for members of the family to bounce back into the “before cancer” roles and expectations. It is important to find a balance between allowing children to participate in care of the home and assigning roles beyond their developmental capabilities. Be careful to not overburden children with added responsibilities as having too many extra chores may only exacerbate resentment and anger.

Talking to children about cancer is frightening and can be emotionally overwhelming. Experts agree that even children as young as three or four years old should be told the truth about cancer. The amount of information and details that you share with your child will depend on their age and what they can comprehend. After ten years working as an oncology social worker specializing in children and families with cancer, the main thing I have learned is do NOT underestimate Baby Bear! Most children already know something is wrong. Children who are not told about their parent’s cancer diagnosis often imagine things are worse than they are. They may think illness is a punishment for bad behavior or that they did something to make their parent sick. Fear of the unknown often produces more anxiety and depression in children and teens than the actual cancer diagnosis. Find a balance between optimism and pessimism to accurately portray your reality. Telling your child “everything will be just fine” or “everything will be just like it was before cancer” is dishonest and not helpful. It is best to offer a realistic, honest and hopeful assessment of your situation. My favorite quote is from a mother who has ovarian cancer. She told her children, “I promise to tell you what is going on and keep you updated. If there’s any information you need to know, I will always tell you.” After the initial crisis of cancer is over, many children still worry about cancer returning, feeling like they are “waiting for the other shoe to drop.” While parents cannot guarantee cancer will not return, they can guarantee they will be honest about it with their children.

The best thing you can do for your child and your family is to be honest, communicate and have an outlet for them to talk. Honor their feelings, even after cancer treatment has ended and you are termed a survivor. They need some kind of psychosocial support whether it is a support group, individual therapy, family therapy, spiritual support or an exercise program; they have to have someone to talk to about cancer and their feelings. Reassure them that your cancer diagnosis is not their fault, value their feelings, answer questions honestly, try to maintain everyday family routines, find a balance between optimism and pessimism, and celebrate the present. Cancer does not need to define or destroy your family. Now is the time to celebrate your life, your children, and your family. Whatever the outcome, your family will survive.

References:

- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org
- Gilda’s Club Seattle: www.gildasclubseattle.org
- CancerCare: www.cancercare.org
- Planet Cancer: www.planetcancer.org
- Dumas, Lynne (1992), *Talking with Your Child About Cancer, Talking With Your Child About A Troubled World*.
- Heiney, Sue (2001), *Cancer in the Family: Helping Children Cope with a Parent’s Illness*, American Cancer Society, Atlanta, GA.
- McCue, Kathleen, and Bonn, Ron (1994). *How to Help Children Through a Parent’s Serious Illness*. St. Martins Press.
- Nelson, Elizabeth, MSc, PhD, While, David MSc, PhD, (2002). Children’s Adjustment During the First Year of a Parent’s Cancer Diagnosis. *Journal of Psychosocial Oncology*, 20 (1).
- Quinn-Beers, Joanne, MSW, (2001) Attachment Needs of Adolescent Daughters of Women With Cancer, *Journal of Psychosocial Oncology*, Vol. 19 (1).
- Sieh, D.S., Meijer, A.M., Oort, F.J (2010) Problem Behavior in Children of Chronically Ill Parents: A Meta-Analysis. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*. Springerlink.com.



“Like” us on Facebook

The Swedish Cancer Institute’s Survivors Facebook page is a great way to hear about the latest cancer research, find useful resources and learn about classes that are offered. Don’t forget to “like” us on Facebook to show your support for the Swedish Cancer Institute! Visit www.facebook.com/SwedishCancerInstitute to learn more.

Summer 2012 Patient Education Classes

The Swedish Cancer Institute offers programs to assist you, your family and your caregivers in making treatment decisions, managing your symptoms, and accessing complementary programs to help your mind, body and spirit to heal. **Registration is required for all classes unless otherwise indicated. To register, call 206-386-2502. Registration is also available online at www.swedish.org/classes.**

Most classes listed are offered at the Swedish Cancer Institute. **The Swedish Cancer Institute's class locations are listed below:**

- Swedish First Hill Campus (Arnold Building, 1221 Madison St., A-Floor West)
- Swedish/Cherry Hill Campus (500 17th Ave.)
- Swedish/Ballard Campus (5300 Tallman Ave. N.W.)
- Swedish/Edmonds Campus (21601 76th Ave. W.)
- Swedish/Issaquah Campus (751 N.E. Blakely Dr.)
- Issaquah Library (10 W. Sunset Way)
- Sammamish Library (825 28th Ave. S.E.)
- Lake Hills Library (15590 Lake Hills Blvd., Bellevue)

After Breast Cancer: What's Next?

An eight-week group for women who are preparing to live life after breast cancer treatment.

*Wednesdays, Sept. 26-Nov. 14, 4:30-6 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Clearwater
Conference Room C*

*or
Thursdays, Sept. 27-Nov. 15, 4:30-6 p.m.
Swedish/Edmonds Campus-Auditorium A*

After Cancer Treatment: What's Next?

An eight-week group for all patients who are preparing to live life after cancer treatment.

*Tuesdays, July 10-Aug. 28, 4:30-6 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Clearwater Conference
Room C*

The Anticancer Lifestyle

Explore recent findings on ways to increase your resistance to cancer with health educator, Carol Robl. Learn how to create an anticancer lifestyle by eating beneficial foods, protecting yourself from environmental threats, and enhancing your physical and emotional wellbeing.

*Tuesday, June 19, 6-7:30 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

*or
Tuesday, July 24, 7-8:30 p.m.
Issaquah Library*

Beauty and Cancer

Gary Manuel Salon is proud to announce Beauty Over Cancer, a new program to help people with cancer. In the program, patients can receive complimentary services at Gary Manuel Salon, such as last hair parties, wig advice and trims, and head shavings. Guests can call Gary Manuel Salon to make a hair appointment at 206-728-1234.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine and Cancer

Join Dan Labriola, N.D. to learn from the expert which complementary and alternative medicine treatments are being promoted for cancer, how they really work, potential benefits, potential side effects and potential interactions with each other as well as conventional cancer treatment. Co-sponsored by Northwest Natural Health.

*Tuesday, Aug. 14, 7-8:30 p.m.
Issaquah Library*

Don't Keep Putting It Off: A class to discuss living wills, medical and financial POA; and hospice

Oncology social worker, Sylvia Farias, MSW, teaches a class for cancer patients and their loved ones to answer questions about end-of-life issues. Topics include tips on how to bring up difficult topics, important planning and choices, and available services including hospice – when and how to enroll.

*Tuesday, Aug. 7, 5-6 p.m.
Lake Hills Library*

Eating Well When Dealing with Cancer

Join Brian Higginson, R.D., as he explains healthy eating, side effect management, and maximizing nutritional intake. Recipe sampling provided.

*Wednesday, June 20, 5-6 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

Fighting Cancer with Naturopathic Nutrition Strategies

Join Lisa Price, N.D., and learn how food and nutrition can affect cancer. What works and what to avoid. Co-sponsored by Northwest Natural Health.

*Monday, August 13, 7-8:30 p.m.
Sammamish Library*

Gentle Yoga

Create balance in the body, breath, and mind in this therapeutic class with registered yoga teacher, Ann Ford. Bring a mat and blanket. *Six sessions.*

*Wednesdays, July 11-Aug. 15, 2-3 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

Hair Alternatives

Appearance consultant Janet Bowman will show you how to create different hair alternatives with scarves, hats and accessories.

*Tuesday, June 26, 1-2:30 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

*or
Wednesday, Aug. 22, 10:30 a.m.-noon
Swedish/Issaquah Campus, Room "Leadership,"
2nd Floor Conference Center*

Healing Chant Circle

The human voice has been used and honored as a healing tool throughout the ages. Come and unlock the potential of your own vocal chords while learning some new and time honored songs and chants from Sha'ari Garfinkel, LICSW, MSW, MT-BC, FAMI. You'll come away feeling enriched, refreshed and invigorated.

*Wednesday, Aug. 22, 6-8 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

Healing the Whole Person: Body, Mind, and Spirit

Explore Dr. Jeremy Geffen's Seven Levels of Healing with health educator, Carol Robl. These provide guidelines that can greatly enhance the lives of those with cancer, those who have completed treatment, and their family members.

*Wednesday, June 27, 10-11:30 a.m.
or*

*Wednesday, Aug. 15, 6-7:30 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

Hot Flashes and Related Symptom Management

Natural medicine offers safe ways to manage hot flashes without the use of hormone therapy. With these simple, practical tips, you'll sleep better and feel better all day. Join Kathleen Pratt, N.D., to learn about diet, lifestyle tips and nutritional supplementation. Co-sponsored by Northwest Natural Health.

*Tuesday, July 17, 7-8:30 p.m.
Issaquah Library*

Look Good, Feel Better

This American Cancer Society class focusing on skin care, cosmetics, hair care and hair loss is designed for women undergoing cancer treatment.

*Monday, June 18, 6-8 p.m.
Monday, July 16, 1-3 p.m.
Monday, August 20, 1-3 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

Meditation for People with Cancer

Join Swedish physical therapist Carolyn McManus for a two-week session that teaches mindfulness meditation. *Two sessions.*

*Tuesdays, Aug. 21 and 28, 3:30-5 p.m.
Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B*

Music for Cancer Symptom Control

Join Sha'ari Garfinkel, LICSW, MSW, MT-BC, FAMI, to learn about the ways that music can rein in common symptoms related to cancer and treatment including pain, nausea, anxiety, depression and fatigue. Participants will learn about the latest research in addition to trying out some practical techniques to feel better.

*Monday, June 18, 7-9 p.m.
Sammamish Library*

Summer 2012 Patient Education Classes

Continued

Music and Relaxation

Discover how music can enhance your ability to de-stress, calm the mind and comfort the body. Sha'ari Garfinkel, LICSW, MSW, MT-BC, FAMI, will share techniques for listening, creating relaxing sound and stimulating imagery. Please bring a pillow and a yoga mat or towel.

Wednesday, July 25, 6-8 p.m.

Swedish/First Hill Campus-Donald A. Tesh, M.D.,
Conference Rooms A and B

Myeloma Today: Diagnosis, Treatment and Side Effects Management

Oncologist Kasra Karamlou will provide an overview of myeloma, and educate families about symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options. Families will take away an understanding of the symptoms and diagnosis of myeloma, what the current treatment landscape in myeloma looks like, and an update on new therapies in myeloma.

Thursday, Aug. 30, 6-7:30 pm

Swedish/Issaquah Campus, 2nd Floor
Conference Center

To register for any of the following sessions, please call 206-386-3200.

Art Therapy: An Approach for Healing

Art therapy is a confidential, supportive and individualized experience to visually and verbally examine health issues through self-exploration. No artistic confidence or experience necessary. Offered by registered art therapist, Nicole Stiver.

Appointment necessary.

A-Floor West, Cancer Education Center
(ongoing 50-minute appointments)

Knit for Life™

This network of volunteers use knitting as a healing experience to enhance the lives of cancer patients, their families, and caregivers during treatment and recovery. It provides a supportive environment for beginning and experienced knitters. All materials are provided.

Cherry Hill: Hospital Lobby Starbucks

Mondays (ongoing), 6-8 p.m.

First Hill: Swedish Cancer Institute, First-Floor
Lobby

Thursdays (ongoing), 1-3 p.m.

Online Education

Swedish Cancer Institute's Cancer Podcasts Program

Are you unable to attend a class in person yet still want the educational experience and information? Join us online anytime at www.swedish.org/cancerpodcasts for a full list of offerings and discover what our experts have to say.

This month's featured podcasts:

Genetic Counseling and Testing: Breast Cancer

Robert Resta, a genetic counselor, provides an overview of genetic testing — specifically for breast cancer.

How to Reduce Cancer Risk

Dr. Dan Labriola, a naturopathic doctor, shares his insights about certain green foods that have the ability to combat cancer.

Home Safety

Occupational therapist Ashleigh Blankenship explains home safety and provides easy tips to make your home safer when recovering from cancer.

For a full listing of our podcasts, please visit us online at www.swedish.org/cancerpodcasts

