By Melissa Erickson

October 28, 2020

E
each woman’s breast cancer jour-
y is unique, so what they deem essential can range from kind words of encouragement to a Murphy pop kit filled with comfy clothing.

“There are actually two essential things a woman needs going through breast cancer treatment: One is a net-
work of friends and family are recruit-
ed to accompany women to their treatments during the entire course. “Research has shown that an average ary,” said Dr. Steven Quay, founder of Anticancer Research Center in Scottsdale, Ari-
"Every case is different, so going with someone who has access to the breast treatments gives you the best shot," he said.

Look for personalized treatment

Choose a cancer home that can offer personalized care and access to clinical trials, said Dr. Justin Favaro, owner-
er of Oncology Specialists of Char-
lotte, Pennsylvania.

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slowly and emotional exhaustion for the finishing is why you need a big group.

"Recording a daily diary is an essen-
tial exercise that offers both spiritual and medical benefits.

"Questions will come up in the mid-
dle of the day and if you don’t write them down immediately to ask your health care provider at your next visit, you will just forget them," Quay said.

Find a walking buddy

"No matter how difficult your treat-
ment, it’s always possible to go for regular walks, and it can be more pleasant to do so with a friend even if you have to stay six feet apart," said Mag Halbruegge, founder of Anticancer Lifestyle Program. "It’s ideal to walk in nature, but even during city strolls, you will get the benefits of exercise and fresh air, as well as the camar-
ionship and support that come from sharing time with a friend."

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Our mission is to provide comprehensive, quality primary and women’s healthcare. The clinic serves Medicare and Medi-Cal beneficiaries. We also participate in two important special programs that cover the cost of mammograms and annual exams in full. Call today to see if you qualify.

The Ridgecrest Rural Health Clinic participates in the Every Woman Counts (EWC) program, which provides FREE clinical breast exams and mammograms, as well as pap tests. We also accept Medi-Care, Medi-Cal and most major insurances, including Family PACT (Family Planning, Access, Care and Treatment).

Call Rural Health at 760-499-3855

When Breast Cancer is found early, it is easier to treat.

Talk to your doctor about:

Your options for Breast Cancer Screening

Any changes or concerns & risk factors
How to deal with fears of recurrence

By Melissa Erickson
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Better treatments and technology lead to increasing breast cancer survival rates, but many women still fear their cancer may return.

“Fear of cancer recurrence is a very normal and common emotion for breast cancer survivors,” said registered nurse Lawana Evans, a cancer survivor who is an oncology nurse navigator with Thompson Cancer Survival Center in Knoxville, Tennessee, part of Covenant Health. “There is never a 100% guarantee that the cancer will not return, so it is very natural to worry about recurrence at some point.”

Defined in the literature as “the fear that cancer may return or progress in the same place or another part of the body,” fear of recurrence is one of the most common concerns that breast cancer patients report, even months and years after completion of surgery and treatment, said Jean-Philippe Lawrenceau, professor in the department of psychological and brain sciences at University of Delaware.

Laurenceau is leading an interdisciplinary team of researchers from University of Delaware and the ChristianaCare Helen F. Graham Cancer Center and Research Institute in Newark, Delaware, to examine how the fear of cancer recurrence affects the wellbeing and relationships of breast cancer patients and their spouses or partners.

Impact on others

“Breast cancer not only affects the person involved, but has a significant

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Every woman’s breasts are different, just like every flower is different. Having dense breasts is normal. It just means your breasts have more tissue than fat.

Dense breasts make a woman up to six times more likely to develop breast cancer. And they make it challenging to detect cancer with a standard mammography exam.

Now in the Women’s Imaging Center, the Invenia™ ABUS (Automated Breast Ultrasound System) improves cancer detection by 35% over mammography in women with dense breasts. Using 3D ultrasound, it looks at dense breasts differently to find cancer that mammography may not see. It’s relatively comfortable, and it doesn’t expose you to any additional radiation. The result: More confidence and peace of mind for you.

Call the Women’s Imaging Center at 760.499.3820 to learn how only the GE Invenia ABUS can give you the definitive answers you need.

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You are stronger than you think

Dietitian and survivor offers advice from her cancer experience

By Melissa Erickson
More Content Now

Registered dietitian Jennifer Smith of White Lake, Michigan, is not just a nutrition expert – she’s a breast cancer survivor.

At 34, Smith was a healthy, busy wife and mother of three girls (ages 7, 4 and 2) building her own nutrition private practice, when she was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. There was no family history of breast cancer. She endured chemotherapy, a double mastectomy with lymph nodes removed, and radiation.

Experts offer solid advice, but survivors know what to expect on a daily basis.

“It has been over a year since I was diagnosed and no one can prepare you for the roller coaster of physical, emotional and mental symptoms that a cancer diagnosis, treatment and even going into survivorship put you through,” Smith said.

One day at a time

“My general advice to people living with breast cancer is to take everything one day at a time,” said Smith, a breast cancer dietitian and lifestyle coach at joyenergynutrition.com. “Focus on taking care of yourself. Find support. You are stronger than you think. You can and will get through this.”

From diagnosis, breast cancer can feel overwhelming. Women are quickly thrown into a world full of appointments, testing, poking and prodding, Smith said. Beneficial treatments often come with adverse side effects.

“It feels like this new world you have entered will never come to an end. You feel like you are never going to make it to the other side of treatment, but I promise that one day at a time you will.”

Yolanda Koch
January 12, 1952- August 31, 2020

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Encouraging our community to support research to find a cure

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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

FIGHT CANCER

EDUCATE. DETECT. DEFEAT.

Did you know 1 in every 8 female members of Our Community, 1 in every 8 females in our world, will receive a breast cancer diagnosis in their lifetime?

We believe it should be ZERO. AltaOne supports the search for a cure.

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HELP US HELP THEM TO FIND A CURE

Mohawk is honored to be a part of the important movement and proudly supports KOMAN FOR A CURE

We are proud to be a part of this!

www.ridgecrestca.com

“You are stronger than you think”

Wednesday, October 28, 2020 www.ridgecrestca.com A9
you will," she said. "Try to focus on the treat- ment or obstacle that you are going through at the moment instead of always looking ahead to what is next."

Take care of yourself

Women and mothers often put themselves last as they are busy car- ing for partners and families. It can feel selfish to take time for ourselves, even if it’s for things that will help keep us healthy like exercising or taking a mental health break, Smith said.

"It’s OK if treatment side effects leave you exhausted and you spend the day resting on the couch instead of al- ways doing. It’s OK if you let other people help you," she said. "Learn to take the time to allow your body to heal and to

learn on other people be- cause no one can do it all themselves."

Talk to someone

"Find a support group, a therapist, a Facebook group. Find someone who understands your struggles," Smith said. "Cancer is a huge bur- den to take on, and sometimes you need help wading through all the emotional and phys- ical crap it puts you through."

Show vulnerability

While others may call you a “brave warrior,” you may not feel that way, Smith said. "You don’t feel very strong or brave when you look into the mirror and see a pale, bald, scared version of your- self staring back," she said. "You don’t feel strong or brave when you are feeling so de- pressed and crappy that you can’t bring yourself to get out of bed in the morning. Showing that vulnerability leads to courage and bravery and strength."

"You are so, so much stronger than you know and give yourself credit for. You can and you will do this."
Breast tomosynthesis is an advanced form of mammography that uses low-dose x-rays for early detection of breast cancer. It helps detect early, when it is most treatable.

**How does it work?**

Like mammograms, the breast is positioned and compressed but the x-ray tube moves in a circular arc to get a 3D image of the breast. These three-dimensional image sets help minimize the tissue overlap that can hide cancers or make it difficult to distinguish normal overlapping breast tissue from tumors.

**How long does the procedure take?**

While your appointment may be between 15 to 30 minutes, it takes less than 10 seconds for the imaging procedure.

**How do I get a 3D Mammogram?**

Schedule an appointment with your OB/GYN to check if you are an ideal candidate for tomosynthesis.

Call the Women’s Imaging Center at 760.499.3820 for more information.

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In Memory of Those We Lost

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The costs of CANCER

By Melissa Erickson
More Content Now

The financial cost of breast cancer can be staggering, even for those who have good health insurance. The most common form of cancer except for skin cancer, breast cancer will kill an estimated 42,170 women in the United States this year and an estimated 279,100 will be diagnosed, according to the American Cancer Society.

About 1 in 4 will have to borrow money, go into debt or file for bankruptcy to pay for treatment, according to a 2019 report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Unfortunately, the costs of any complex treatment are a burden on Americans, irrespective of insurance," said Dr. Derek Raghavan, president of the Levine Cancer Institute, Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Any kind of cancer is a big hit financially. If you have great health insurance, even for those who have good health insurance, breast cancer can be staggering, even for those who have good health insurance." Pilon said. Without insurance a woman often must navigate various tactics insurance companies may use to avoid paying, such as very complex pre-authorization forms, fine-print limitations to reimbursement that may not be clear when patients sign up, and health insurance running out, Raghavan said.

"We are recently seeing women with new plans on the market that advertise coverage at an affordable/appealing cost for lower income earners, only to find that actual treatment is not covered, only screening," Raghavan said.

"Unexpected extras such as complications of care with hospitalization and blood tests that are not covered by insurance often emerge," Raghavan said.

"Because of side effects women also need to purchase personal items that are not considered essential and, more often than not, fall outside insurance parameters. For example, a woman coping with alopecia during treatment may want to purchase a wig but she may not have the $375 or more it costs out of pocket."

The American Cancer Society recommends that at age 40 women begin getting screened annually for breast cancer, but for some women basic screenings can be a financial hardship, Pilon said.

"If breast cancer is diagnosed early women have good overall survival, but the cost of a screening can be prohibitive for some women," Pilon said. Without insurance a mammogram can cost $100 or more depending on where a woman lives.

"Screening is generally available to women with insurance, although the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force has set age limits that prevent younger women from being screened by many programs," Raghavan said. "For uninsured women it can be a huge issue, as many states do not provide coverage."

"For example, in the Charlotte, North Carolina, region, a great deal of mammographic screening is supported purely by philanthropy, as the state and county have essentially run out of resources to provide mammography for all eligible and appropriate women, Raghavan said.

"For women near the poverty line, they simply cannot afford the cost of mammography," he said. COVID-19 is only making things worse, as screenings were deemed elective early on in the pandemic, which will lead to later detection and more costly treatment, Pilon said.

The Affordable Care Act provides free mammograms every one to two years for women age 40 and over. The Susan G. Komen Foundation and the National Breast Cancer Foundation provide free and low-cost breast cancer screenings across the country. Find out more at komen.org/breast-cancer-broadline.html and nationalbreastcancer.org or our programs.

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