

Breast Cancer Awareness and Local Care

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October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During this month, breast cancer survivors and the medical community dedicate time to increase awareness on the importance of early detection and treatment options.

The American Cancer Society estimates the following statistics:

- There will be 1.5 million people in the United States diagnosed with cancer (20,600 in Connecticut) in 2009.
- Approximately 562,000 people in this country will die of cancer (7,000 in Connecticut) in 2009.
- Breast cancer accounts for more than 1 out of 4 new cancer diagnoses in the U.S., approximately 193,000 women (2,800 in Connecticut) in 2009.
- The lifetime risk of a woman developing breast cancer is approximately 1 in 8.
- Approximately 2,000 men in the U.S. will also be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009.

While we as a community join together for breast cancer awareness purposely this month, it is important to point out that breast cancer affects the lives of many people in Northeast Connecticut not only during the month of October, but every day. Fortunately, resources to prevent, diagnose and treat breast cancer, as well as to care for people with breast cancer, are conveniently located and easy to access right here in Northeast Connecticut, close to home.

Many new treatments have been developed over the past several years to treat breast cancer and many more promising therapies may become the standards of care in the near future. Through the Rose Bove Larose Hematology-Oncology Center located at Day Kimball Hospital, people with breast cancer can receive state-of-the-art treatments in a friendly, compassionate and caring setting. Day Kimball Hospital itself offers an array of services designed to complement the multidisciplinary care of people with breast cancer, including PET/CT scan imaging, cancer and reconstruction surgery, laboratory and genetic testing, chemotherapy and biologic therapy, preventive interventions, cancer survivorship and complementary/supportive care.

Over the last several years, a number of very exciting advances in breast cancer care have been rapidly occurring. We can offer tamoxifen to some women to decrease their risk of getting breast cancer in the first place. We can find breast cancer when it is small and curable through the use of mammograms and MRI. We can cure more women with early stage disease (involving just the breast or the breast along with lymph nodes) or locally advanced breast cancer (extensive involvement of the breast and lymph nodes, but not spread elsewhere in the body) through the combination of surgery, chemotherapy, antibody therapy, radiation treatment, and/or hormonal medications. A full complement of therapies can be given before surgery to decrease the extent of cancer and/or given after surgery to eradicate any remaining cancer cells. We can help people with breast cancer live longer and with a good quality of life even when the breast cancer is of an advanced stage throughout the body.

Although much progress has been made in diagnosing cancer at an early stage and in treating it (more people are being cured of their cancer or living longer with advanced-stage cancer),

the best means of tackling cancer are to decrease the risk of developing it in the first place or finding it when it is small and can be cured. Day Kimball Hospital provides evaluations for determining ways to decrease the risk of developing breast cancer and screening for it. BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 genetic testing can be performed in collaboration with an evaluation by one of Day Kimball Hospital's oncologists. And, clinical research trials studying new ways to administer chemotherapy drugs or evaluating novel experimental medications are available through Day Kimball Hospital's affiliation with the Cancer Center at UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Cancer survivorship is equally important to keep people healthy and to decrease the risk of cancer recurrence or a second cancer developing. People in our community, like you, play a key role in helping to support the hospital's mission so that more people in Northeast Connecticut can be helped by the best that medicine has to offer. Your continued support allows Day Kimball Hospital to provide cancer treatment services locally.

Besides talking with your doctor or health care provider to learn more about what you can do for yourself, for a family member or for a friend, please be aware of the following breast cancer recommendations, according to the American Cancer Society.

- For most women, annual mammograms should start at age 40
- Mammograms should be performed before the age of 40 when an increased risk exists such as family members with breast cancer or other cancers
- Different screening modalities, such as ultrasound or MRI, should be performed if certain individual reasons exist for such enhanced screening tests
- Clinical breast examination by a health care provider should be performed once every 1-3 years between the ages of 20 and 40, and then on an annual basis starting at age 40
- Self breast examinations should be performed monthly

The Rose Bove Larose Hematology-Oncology Center and Day Kimball Hospital is committed to providing the very best in breast cancer care to the people of Northeast Connecticut. All of the doctors, nurses and staff in Day Kimball Hospital's Rose Bove Larose Hematology-Oncology Center and throughout Day Kimball Healthcare are proud to be a part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The Rose Bove Hematology-Oncology Center at Day Kimball Hospital can be reached at 860-963-6425. Dr. Jeffrey Gordon and Dr. Neil Kluger are the hematology (blood diseases) and oncology (cancer) specialists at Day Kimball Hospital and are also affiliated with UMass Memorial Medical Center. Rounding out their team is Heidi Welch, APRN, nurses Jane Burlingame, Anne Marie Chase, Susan Hibbard and Patricia Zikorus; and office staff Lauren King, Marjorie Roy and Traci Lakotta.