

Fall 2020 Special Edition

Survivorship Clinic by Elizabeth Dennis, DO



Did you know that there are about 17 million cancer survivors in the U.S., and that the number of survivors is growing every day? Among our neighbors, there are approximately 20,000 cancer survivors. To address the unique needs of these people in our region, Northern Light Cancer Center in Brewer is committed to developing a Survivorship Program. The progress is in the early stages, however there are some exciting things happening now, and soon, there will be more dedicated services to support the health and well-being of people during their cancer journey.

Elizabeth Dennis, DO, a primary care physician who has special interest in caring for patients with cancer, joined the cancer team in November 2019 to coordinate program development. She has been working with patients of Cancer Care in the Northern Light Mayo Hospital

Oncology outreach clinic since 2011. This experience, coupled with training in Internal Medicine, positions her well to lead the Survivorship Program development.

Currently, some cancer survivors at Cancer Care who have completed their treatment are seeing Dr. Dennis in the new Survivorship program. This comprehensive visit, which complements the care provided by other members of the cancer team, focuses on discussion and management of late and long-term effects of cancer and its treatment, guidance about healthy lifestyle behaviors, and surveillance and screening for recurrent cancer and new cancers. The survivor will also learn about available supportive resources both within Northern Light Health and in the community.

Additionally, Dr. Dennis and her team are in the process of developing a multidisciplinary survivorship visit. The goal of this service is to give survivors the benefit of meeting with a licensed clinical social worker, dietitian, physical therapist, and medical provider, all within one visit! The team anticipates that survivors beginning the transition from completing cancer treatment to surviving and thriving after cancer diagnosis and treatment, will be the first people to take advantage of this new service.

Look out for more about our Survivorship program, as we anticipate many great things to come!

Hair Preservation Campaign gets closer to goal



Hair loss is one of the most devastating side effects of chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer, but fortunately, it's not inevitable. FDA-approved scalp cooling technology allows patients to keep more of their hair during treatment for solid-tumor cancers. The campaign to bring scalp cooling to the Lafayette Family Cancer Institute recently received a boost thanks to a generous \$25,000 donation by Bangor Savings Bank.

Scalp cooling can help patients feel more like themselves and potentially reduce their stress and anxiety. The money raised will cover the equipment lease and offset the cost of silicone caps for each patient, which are not covered by insurance.

Bangor Savings Bank's generous donation brings the campaign total to nearly \$164,000. To learn more and contribute, please visit northernlighthealth.org/beautifulhair.



Clinical Pearl – New drug approvals by A. Merrill Garrett, MD

Over the past year there have been two new drug approvals for metastatic breast cancer that is Her2/neu positive. The drugs are Tucatinib and Trastuzumab-deruxtecan. They have different mechanisms of action with one being an oral medication the other an intravenous drug-antibody conjugate.

Tucatinib the oral tyrosine kinase inhibitor, was approved based on the HER2 CLIMB study that was reported at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in December 2019. In the study, 480 patients with Her2 positive metastatic breast cancer whose disease had progressed on prior treatment with trastuzumab, pertuzumab and ado-trastuzumab emtansine were randomized to either tucatinib or trastuzumab combined with an oral chemotherapy, capecitabine. 48% of the participants had brain metastases. The study showed significant increase in disease free survival over 12 month (i.e. cancer progressing on treatment or not) and improved the survival of participants with brain metastases at one year from 0% to 25%. Overall survival was improved by nearly 5 months. The drug has significant side effects common with this class of agent including skin reactions, diarrhea, nausea, mouth sores and anemia. This is exciting data for the treatment of metastatic Her2 positive breast cancer, particularly those with brain metastases.

Trastuzumab-deruxtecan (Enhertu) is a drug antibody conjugate that combines the antibody trastuzumab (Herceptin) with a potent cytotoxic chemotherapy drug of the topoisomerase class of agents - deruxtecan, to form a “smart” drug that delivers the drug to cancer cells. The approval was based on the DESTINY trial in which 184 patients with either unresectable or metastatic Her2 positive breast cancer whose disease had progressed on two or more prior anti-Her2 therapies were treated with the drug intravenously every three weeks until progression or lack of tolerance. The study showed that 60% of participants had significant shrinkage of tumor (overall response rate), that the median duration of response was greater than one year (14.8 months). Side effects are common chemo side effects of nausea/vomiting, hair loss and problems with blood counts primarily. This is another very exciting option for treating Her2 positive metastatic breast cancer after it has progressed through multiple regimens.

Social Connection during COVID-19 by Renee Hunter, LCSW

As we each do our part to help prevent the spread of coronavirus by practicing social distancing and staying home, many folks express feeling bored, anxious, and even isolated. Research shows that feeling connected socially is vital for your overall health and well-being. Engaging with your friends and family are proven to have the following benefits: longer life, stronger immune system, overall happiness, improved memory and cognitive skills, increased motivation for self-care, and lower levels of stress hormones. Since spending days (or weeks) at home with limited stimulation and social contact can take a toll on one’s mental health, let’s look at ways to build connectedness through virtual technology:

- Use video chat applications. Schedule regular days with loved ones for video calls or have a game night with friends using Skype, Facetime, or Google Hangouts.
- Consider trying an app on your device. For example, Calm is a mindfulness app that has numerous exercises at various lengths, recorded talks, and calendars to print with mindful ideas for everyday activities.
- Does your neighborhood or church have a Facebook group? Joining could lead to fun activities and new friendships.
- Try joining an online support group or class. Virtual yoga or movement classes help with agility, flexibility and concentration. Cancercare.org offers several support groups where participation can occur via phone or video chat.

Remember, we’re all going through similar challenges during this pandemic and staying connected virtually can help ease stress, reduce suffering, and promote over all wellness.

Families Matter



A priority of the Northern Light Breast Cancer Advisory Board is to acknowledge the special significance and distinct needs for support for our families and children, who along with us face the unique challenges of survivorship. A goal to create a community of healing, support, and understanding for families surviving breast cancer include special activities and events to create positive opportunities for families to come together.

Our Spreading Sunshine Sunflower Activity, held on July 14th, 2020, was the first of these events! Breast cancer survivors and their families came together to plant sunflower seeds, then share the seedlings with other children and survivors. The remaining sunflowers were planted at Northern Light Cancer Care to continue to spread a little sunshine and hope to all.

Many thanks to all who made this fun event possible!

-Michelle & Rachel

Resource Corner

Caring for a Loved One with Cancer

Mondays, 10:30 to 11:30 am

Caring for a loved one with cancer can be overwhelming, but you don't have to go through it alone. This group allows caregivers to talk to others who are experiencing the same joys and challenges.

Living with Advanced Cancer

Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30 am

If you are living with advanced cancer, recurrent or metastatic cancer, join us. Sharing your experience in a supportive environment can lessen isolation, fear, and provide hope. Learn how to take the best possible care of yourself and your family.

Food and Lifestyle Factors to Fight Breast Cancer

Friday, November 20, 1-3 pm

While you are in treatment for breast cancer, food may be one of the last things on your mind. Learn how to use nutrition as a tool to feel better, and find out how to thrive by speaking to our food and nutrition experts and discussing healthy lifestyle choices.

Learn more about our support groups at NorthernLightHealth.org/cancer.

Helping teens cope with a loved one facing cancer

Cancercare.org/tagged/teens

Helping kids cope with parents facing cancer

Mdanderson.org/kiwi

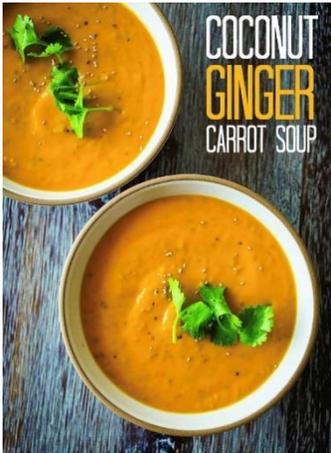
Near the bottom of the web page, click on "Kid to kid - learning to cope when your parent has cancer."

Carrot Coconut Ginger Soup

This is a wonderful soup that can warm you for fall that is also loaded with phytochemicals. Garlic provides compounds such as flavonoids, inulin and saponins. The flavonoids provide anti-cancer properties while inulin acts as a prebiotic, which increases the beneficial bacteria in the gut. Saponins may lower your cancer risk.

The carrots, a root vegetable, provide several health benefits as well. They are rich in antioxidants, aid in relieving constipation, and can help to maintain healthy cholesterol levels. Ginger is widely known as an anti-inflammatory agent. Both the ginger and garlic can lower your blood sugar levels.

The peeled potatoes provide a blend of vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and iron. They also are appropriate for those experiencing loose stools. Coconut milk is a great choice for those with lactose issues and is a good source of magnesium and potassium. Overall, this soup is a great, healthy choice!



3/4 cup	Onion, coarsely chopped
2 Tbl	Oil
2 Tbl	Ginger, peeled, and minced
3 cloves	Garlic, coarsely chopped
1 ½ lbs	Carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped
½ lb	Potatoes, peeled, and coarsely chopped
1 Qt	Vegetable (or chicken) broth
1 can	Coconut milk (do not use low fat)
	Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat.
2. Add onions; sauté until just translucent.
3. Add ginger & garlic. Sauté one minute.
4. Add carrots, potatoes, & broth. Bring to a boil.
5. Cover the pan, reduce heat to low and simmer until carrots and potatoes are tender (20-30 minutes). Time will depend on how large/small the pieces are.
6. Remove from heat. Add coconut milk. Let cool slightly.
7. Puree soup (in batches) in a blender. We recommend using a standard blender to make the soup very smooth. This is a better choice than an immersion blender.
8. Return soup to pan. Season with salt and pepper. Heat gently, if needed.

Recipe thanks to Cheryl Fasse, Chef

Northern Light Cancer Care

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