

Journeys

News and inspiration for
Dignity Health Cancer Institute
patients and family

Winter 2020



“Chemobrain” = Chemotherapy-Associated Cognitive Decline

Written by: Eva Lukas, MA, LMFT

Have you experienced difficulty with memory, planning, or paying attention? Are you familiar with the meaning behind “brain fog?” During a conversation, do you sometimes have trouble remembering a certain word? Is it challenging for you to keep organized in your life? Are you the kind of person who remembered everybody’s birthday prior to a cancer diagnosis, but now has trouble recalling names of family members who attended Christmas dinner at your house just a couple of months ago? All of the above can be frustrating and debilitating side effects of cancer treatments. And you are not alone. Currently, the population of cancer survivors is expected to double from 15 to 30 million within the next decade. More than half of cancer survivors suffer from Chemobrain, and symptoms may persist months or years after treatment has been completed.

The good news is that symptoms will improve in most patients over time. And patients live longer due to advances in early diagnosis and treatment, which may

continued on page 2

In This Issue

“Chemobrain” = Chemotherapy-Associated Cognitive Decline

The Power of Food: New Food Product Trends for 2020

Woodland Oncology Care Bags

Skin Cancer Prevention, Education and Screening

Look Good Feel Better – Dignity Health Cancer Institute Partners with Look Good Feel Better

Making Strides: ACS Walk

Shine a Light on Cancer

“Stitches of Love”

Breast Cancer Survivorship Tea

BRA Day USA

February is Cancer
Prevention Month

March is Multiple Myeloma
& Colorectal Cancer
Awareness Months



Dignity Health™
Cancer Institute
of Greater Sacramento

“Chemobrain” = Chemotherapy-Associated Cognitive Decline, continued from page 1

be one reason why Chemobrain is more prevalent today than it has been in the past. This year, the University of Texas published an observational study and stated that longer duration of treatment and higher doses of chemotherapy are associated with a higher probability of developing changes in cognitive functioning. Researchers also found that advanced age, comorbidities, and medications (including hormone treatment), can be related to poorer cognitive functioning overall. Also, changes may be related to brain radiation, prior traumatic brain injuries, fatigue, sleep deprivation, or pain. The issue is complex. But what exactly causes this set of symptoms? In 2018, Stanford University examined the effects related to the impact on brain cells caused by the chemotherapy drug methotrexate on mice. After four weeks of treatment, the mice exhibited behavioral issues similar to humans with Chemobrain, including motor impairment as expressed in slower body movement, symptoms of anxiety, and decline in short-term memory function. Symptoms identified in mice persisted for six months following completion of treatment. Chemotherapy had an effect on three different types of brain cells and was expressed in structural changes in white matter and changes in neural transmission of messages. Unfortunately, more research is needed to understand the exact mechanism behind the

cellular and molecular mechanisms related to changes. Only then will it be possible to develop strategies for effective treatment. Currently, extensive research is being conducted to identify how treatment affects brain structure and function. But what we do know is that cognitive impairment is a real and a recognized syndrome.

There is much hope. Talk to your doctor. A neurologist can assess changes and suggest treatment options. I recently talked to a patient who found speech therapy very helpful. But in the meantime, while we are waiting for drugs to lessen symptoms of Chemobrain to pass their clinical trial period and become available as prescription medication, it is helpful to know that changes in lifestyle have been found to have positive effects by enhancing brain regeneration and expediting recovery. Harvard’s Dr. Dietrich published an article last month, stating that regular physical exercise can stimulate growth of new neurons and facilitate connections between brain cells. He also stresses the importance of sufficient restorative sleep. Do you get enough good quality sleep during the recommended 7-9 hours every night? And did you know that good nutrition can be helpful in minimizing cancer-related damage to brain cells? How about positive and stress-reducing activities? According to Dr. Dietrich, “brain plasticity and nervous system regeneration can be enhanced when all senses are activated.” So check out stress reduction and mindfulness. These facts are very empowering. What would you like to try to help your brain heal? How about joining a support group, re-connecting with friends, engaging in an enjoyable activity, writing a journal, starting a new hobby, practicing yoga, meditation, and deep breathing techniques? Not enough time left in the day with all those medical appointments on your schedule? Well, you are spending all this time finding your keys – why not put them down in the same place from now on? And if that does not work for you, add one of those electronic sensors to your keychain that will help you locate your keys from your phone. Save your time and energy by eliminating the time spent running frantically around your house looking for those keys. And suddenly you have created space in your life to take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and notice what is happening in your body. Well done! Off to a great start! Now keep up the good work!



The Power of Food: New Food Product Trends for 2020

Written by: Susan Liebert, MS, RD, CSO, CDE

There are a number of interesting new food trends for 2020. The following are trends focused on increasing fruits, vegetables, plant-based protein, and healthy fats in foods which can help reduce risk for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Look for them in at your local grocery store during the year.

- New flours made from fruits, vegetables, seeds, and roots that are gluten free, higher in fiber and protein (sold as flour or baked into chips and other snack foods):
 - Cauliflower flour
 - Tigernut flour (this is a root, not a nut)
 - Mixed seed (pumpkin, flax, chia, hemp, sunflower) flour
- While last year was about seed butters, 2020 is about fruit, exotic seed, and bean butters:
 - Watermelon seed butter
 - Pili tree nut butter (tree grown in the Philippines)
 - Chickpea (garbanzo bean) butter
 - Seeds are a good source of mono and polyunsaturated fat. Both seeds and beans contain good plant sources of fiber and protein, as well as vitamins and minerals (B complex,

phosphorus, magnesium, iron, calcium, vitamin E, zinc, selenium)

- Healthier snacking options in the refrigerated section: portion controlled, protein packed, limited ingredients, preservative free:
 - Single serving bone broth
 - Free range hard-boiled egg with crunchy dip
 - High protein peanut butter cups with whole food powders from fruit, vegetables, and seeds
 - Protein bars with organic fruits, vegetables, and seeds
- New sweeteners made from whole foods—fruits, seeds, and roots—to use in place of other liquid sweeteners (honey, molasses, maple syrup) in baking, sauces, and beverages:
 - Date syrup
 - Sweet potato syrup
 - Pomegranate seed syrup
- More non soy plant-based protein in foods and protein powders:
 - Mixture of grains and mung beans for complete plant-based protein powder
 - Addition of mushrooms, grains, and vegetables to beef in blended burgers

Woodland Oncology Care Bags

The Pierce High School Volleyball team members took time off during their vacation to hand delivered the bags to the Oncology Center. The bags were received by Dr. Schwerkoske, Maria Buenaventura RN, and Cindy Sucevich, ONN. Coaches Kim Travis and Alison Crandall, as well as the team members raised funds to make “Care Bags” for the Woodland Oncology patients. Team members wrote inspirational quotes on the teacups and filled the bag with goodies they thought would brighten a patient’s day. K. Travis stated “the match we play is just a game, but for them their treatments are a battle and we just want to bring some happiness to their day! Spreading kindness a little at a time!”



Skin Cancer Prevention, Education and Screening

Dignity Health Cancer Institute offered an educational discussion at three of its facilities in the region. Woodland Memorial Hospital, Mercy Cancer Center and Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital invited community residents as well as the uninsured and underinsured and those with limited access to healthcare to hear licensed dermatologists speak about skin cancer risks and prevention tips. Attendees were educated on the importance of screening, prevention efforts, early detection and how to navigate the referral process for further evaluation. At each event, a free total body physician-directed skin screening exam was offered by a qualified Dignity Health physician. At Woodland, out of the 33 who attended, 19 chose to be screened. Out of the 19 screened, there was only one positive who is being followed up with Dr. Horney. At the Mercy Cancer Center, out of the 27 who attended, 20 chose to be screened. Out of the 20 screened, there were no positive findings. If there had been any positive findings, Dr. Jesse Kramer would have followed up with that person and would have facilitated any referrals that resulted from the follow up exam. At our Sierra Nevada Memorial event, 29 people were recommended to seek biopsy.

Look Good Feel Better: Dignity Health Cancer Institute Partners with Look Good Feel Better

Look Good Feel Better is a non-medical, brand-neutral public service program that teaches beauty techniques to people with cancer to help them manage the appearance-related side effects of cancer treatment. The program is open to all women with cancer who are undergoing chemotherapy, radiation, or other forms of treatment. The program includes lessons on skin and nail care, cosmetics, wigs and turbans, accessories and styling, helping people with cancer to find some normalcy in a life that is by no means normal. Dignity Health plans on hosting a Look Good Feel Better session each month at our different hospital locations. For further information about dates and times at our facilities, please contact Angela Gianulias at 916.962.8893.

Making Strides: ACS Walk

On Sunday, October 20, 2019, the American Cancer Society held its Making Strides Against Breast Cancer annual event. Over twenty thousand enthusiastic participants braved the rain to raise \$425,000 in the fight against breast cancer to fund breast cancer research and providing access to care for breast cancer patients in our area. Making Strides Against Breast Cancer is the largest network of breast cancer awareness events in the nation, uniting nearly 300 communities to finish the fight against breast cancer. Every breast cancer walk and event is an incredible and inspiring opportunity to honor those who have battled breast cancer, raise awareness about what we can do to reduce our breast cancer risk, and raise money to help the American Cancer Society fight the disease with research, information and services, and access to mammograms for women who need them. Funds raised will provide life-saving research as well as programs and services for patients and family members.



A big shout out to Dignity Health Cancer Institute of Greater Sacramento for their continued support of Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. #NoOneWalksAlone

Shine a Light on Lung Cancer

Each year Dignity Health Cancer Institute hosts an event in partnership with Shine a Light on Lung Cancer. Our mission is to educate and unite our lung cancer patients and their families as well as the community about staying updated on cancer treatments advances, advocacy, survivorship and support. Thank you to Dr. Melissa Lemieux, Radiation Oncologist with Mercy Medical Group, who educated attendees on prevention tips, screenings,

symptoms, diagnosis, and coping with diagnosis. This forum allowed patients and caretakers to celebrate and remember survivors, caregivers and all individuals who have been impacted by the disease as well as time to connect with other attendees. By Shining a Light in our community, we are transforming lung cancer from a disease that no one talks about into one that receives increased attention and compassion. Thank you for helping us to further the efforts of Lung Cancer Alliance in saving lives and advancing research.

“Stitches of Love”

Jennifer McDermott and her team from “Stitches of Love” delivered beautiful, handmade creations of hats. Scarves, and blankets for patients at the Mercy Cancer Center. All were so grateful.



Breast Cancer Survivorship Tea

Again this year DHCI supported Dr. Joelle Jakobsen’s 15th Annual Breast Cancer Survivor Tea, which was held at the Citrus Heights Community Center. 250 survivors attended. This annual tea, in conjunction with National Breast Cancer Month, has become a beloved and much anticipated event for women who are breast cancer survivors or who are currently undergoing breast cancer treatment. This annual event is an important day for breast cancer survivors because it’s a special day to celebrate, be thankful, and share a special bond with other women in the community who have been through a similar journey.



BRA Day USA

On October 16, 2019, Dignity Health Cancer Institute along with Mercy Medical Group hosted an educational event for the public. Breast Reconstruction Awareness (BRA) Day USA is a campaign designed to promote public education, timely patient care, and new research on Breast Cancer Reconstruction. The goals are to educate breast cancer patients about their breast reconstruction options, while advocating for the rights of patients to be made aware of their options at the time of diagnosis. BRA Day USA provided access to a medical team to further discuss these options and provide new research. Dr. Carrie Black led a team of medical professionals who addressed questions from patients and their families. This panel of physicians mirrors the patient’s team of professionals who work together from the onset of a woman’s breast cancer diagnosis to develop and implement a treatment plan tailored to each patient. This team approach improves patient outcomes and quality of life. A big thank you to the vendors who participated in BRA Day USA. We hope to see you next year!

Grass Valley Cancer Center Resources

A Cancer diagnosis impacts not only the patient but loved ones as well. Families and other interested patients are welcome to utilize these resources. Services are offered at no cost to cancer patients, family members, and caregivers. For information on any of the groups or classes below (where another number is not given) call Rebecca Parsons at **530.274.6656**.

CANCER CENTER LENDING LIBRARY

THE ART OF HEALING WITH Nanci Shandera, PhD

8-week courses, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
drnanci@earthspiritcenter.com or EarthSpiritCenter.com

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP WITH Linda Meyers, LCSW

Wednesdays, 3 – 4:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.478.1273

CARE SUPPORT GROUP WITH Jeanine Bryant, MS for Family and Friends of Cancer Patients

Wednesdays, 3 – 4:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.274.6654

COMFORT CUISINE MEALS

Delicious, nutritious, homemade meals for patients and caregivers. Frozen, individual portions, ready to reheat. Pick up in the Cancer Center.

G.A.T.E.: GRIEVING AND TRANSITIONING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE TO CANCER WITH Jeanine Bryant, MS

Tuesdays, 3:30 – 5 p.m.
Contact: 530.274.6654

HARP CLASSES WITH Lisa Stine

Fridays, weekly for 12 weeks
Contact: Lisa Stine, 530.632.6226

KIDSCOPE: FOR CHILDREN IMPACTED BY CANCER WITH Jeanine Bryant, MS

Contact: 530.274.6654

NURSE NAVIGATOR Mary Carvalho, RN, BSN

530.274.6179

NUTRITIONAL CONSULTATIONS Kelley Kull, RD, CDE

Available for appointment
Contact: 530.274.6600

OVARIAN CANCER GROUP WITH Mary Carvalho

Third Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Contact: Mary Carvalho 530.274.6179

PROSTATE DISCUSSION GROUP WITH Mary Peterson, LMFT

Fourth Thursday of each month, 4:30 – 6 p.m.
Contact: 530.478.1880

TRANSFORMATIONAL WHOLENESS WITH Nanci Shandera, PhD

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.265.9097
drnanci@earthspiritcenter.com
EarthSpiritCenter.com

THE ART OF HEALING WITH Nanci Shandera, PhD

8-week courses, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
drnanci@earthspiritcenter.com
EarthSpiritCenter.com

WOMAN TO WOMAN: SHARING THE CANCER EXPERIENCE WITH Jeanine Bryant, MS

Wednesdays, 9:30 – 11 a.m.
Contact: 530.274.6654

WRITING TO HEAL WITH Molly Fisk Creative Writing Class

8 weekly classes
Thursdays, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.265.8751

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

CANCER AID THRIFT SHOP

Provides financial assistance, equipment, etc.
Contact: 530.273.2365

HOPE BEARERS

Christ-centered cancer and chronic illness support group
Third Saturday of the month, 11 a.m.
Foothill Church
Contact: Amy & Wayne, 530.518.0519
or Sally, 530.273.1468

Dignity Health Cancer Institute Complementary Classes & Support Groups

For more information on any of the listings below, call **916.962.8892**. If you're looking for support from our Oncology Nurse Navigators, please call **833.DHCINAV** or email **DHCINAV@dignityhealth.org**.

45 AND YOUNGER BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Saturday of every month
Roseville, CA
Call Mari for location and time: 916.986.4585

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Thursday of every month, 4:30 – 6 p.m.
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
6403 Coyle Avenue, Carmichael, CA 95608

4th Tuesday of every month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Mercy Cancer Center, Large Conference Room
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Friday of every month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Mercy Cancer Center (Family Conference Rm)
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816
For more information please contact 916.990.8454

FOLSOM CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Every Thursday, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
1675 Creekside Dr., Boardroom
Folsom, CA 95630

GYNECOLOGIC CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Wednesday of every month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Mercy Cancer Center (Large Conference Rm)
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816

LUNG AND ESOPHAGEAL CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

1st Wednesday of every month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Alternates every other month between Mercy Cancer Center & Mercy San Juan Medical Center
(MCC = Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov)
(MSJ = Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec)
Call 855.637.2962 for location

MULTIPLE MYELOMA SUPPORT GROUP

1st Saturday of every month, 10 a.m. – noon
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
6555 Coyle Avenue, Ste. 140, Carmichael, 95608

ONCOLOGY CARE THERAPIST

Eva Lukas, MA, LMFT
916.537.5262
Appointments available upon request

ONCOLOGY DIETICIAN

Susan Liebert, MS, RD, CSO, CDE
916.962.8868
Appointments available upon request

ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATORS

1-833-DHCINAV / 916.962.8892
DHCINAV@dignityhealth.org

ONCOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

Every Thursday of the month
11:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m.
Mercy Hospital of Folsom (Boardroom)
1675 Creekside Drive – Folsom
Call 916-986-4585 for details

OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP

1st Saturday of every month, 10 a.m. – noon
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
6501 Coyle Avenue, Carmichael, 95608

PROSTATE SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Thursday of every month, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Alternates every other month between Mercy San Juan Medical Center & UC Davis
MSJ / 6555 Coyle Ave, Ste 150, Carmichael
(Odd months)
UCD / 4501 X St., Sacramento
(Even months)

STRESS REDUCTION & MINDFULNESS COURSE

6 week class series –4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Pre-registration is required –class size is limited

TRANSITION TO WELLNESS

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Please call 916.962.8893 to RSVP

YOGA CLASSES

Every Monday & Wednesday, 5 – 6 p.m.
Mercy Cancer Center (Large Conference Room)
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816