

Living With, Through & Beyond Cancer



Fall 2022

Lung Cancer

Despite advances in the treatment of lung cancer, it remains the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide. 1 in 16 people will be diagnosed with lung cancer in their lifetime. More than 236,000 people were diagnosed with lung cancer in the United States in 2022, and more than 130,000 people lost their lives to lung cancer in 2022. While these numbers continue to be of concern, we have seen remarkable progress. With the continued research and development of immunotherapy and targeted treatments for lung cancer, cancer deaths in the past 10 years have been cut in half for men and reduced by a third for women.

Smoking remains the leading risk factor for developing lung cancer, accounting for 80% of diagnoses while only 20% of lung cancers are diagnosed in people who have never smoked. Radon gas exposure is the second leading risk factor for lung cancer with other risk factors including secondhand smoke, asbestos exposure, exposure to certain metal dusts, radiation, air pollution and diesel exhaust.

Symptoms that may lead to further work-up for concern of lung cancer include:

- B** Blood when you cough or spit
- R** Recurring respiratory infections
- E** Enduring cough that is new or different
- A** Ache or pain in shoulder, back or chest
- T** Trouble breathing
- H** Hoarseness or wheezing
- E** Exhaustion, weakness or loss of appetite

LOW DOSE CT Lung Cancer Screening

Who is eligible?
Current or former smokers.
• Ages 50 to 77 for patients with Medicare
• Ages 50 to 80 for patients with Private Insurance
History of at least 20 pack years of smoking.
• A pack year equals the number of packs smoked per day times the number of years the patient smoked.
Former smokers must have quit within the past 15 years.

Who is not eligible? (any of the following)
• Pneumonia or respiratory infection treated with antibiotics in the previous 12 weeks.
• Recent bloody sputum.
• Unexplained weight loss of more than 15 lbs. in the past 12 months prior to exam.
• CT scan of Chest within past 12 months

Lung Cancer facts
SMOKING is the #1 risk factor for lung cancer.
80% of lung cancer deaths are linked to smoking.
Almost 9 out of 10 lung cancer patients die when the disease is not detected early enough.

The Low Dose CT Screening test **IS ONLY AVAILABLE** with an office visit and documentation of discussions about the screening.

Talk to your provider today about getting a Low Dose CT screening test.

Stormont Vail Health
stormontvail.org

If you are a smoker, consider smoking cessation to reduce your risk of lung cancer.

Contact your Cotton O'Neil Provider to discuss smoking cessation options!

(Lung Cancer Research Organization, 2022)

Lung Cancer Patient Story — Steve Kessler

Immunotherapy has certainly changed the outlook of treatment for many patients. In 2015 when Steve Kessler was diagnosed with Stage 4 Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer with metastases in his bones and brain, he was told his life expectancy was in the timeframe of months. Steve said that while awaiting additional testing and approval to participate in a clinical trial, his condition worsened and he began chemotherapy. He also had radiation and Gamma Knife (stereotactic radio surgery) on several brain lesions.



(Steve Kessler - Continued)

Steve was unsure what the future held at that point. “At almost the same time that my course of chemo ended, the FDA approved an immunotherapy drug, Opdivo, for use and I met the criteria for using it. My condition almost immediately began to improve. I gained back the 70 pounds I had lost during chemo and then some. The cancer basically disappeared and has not recurred.”

Steve said that in the 7 years since starting treatment he has been afforded the opportunity to celebrate more milestones with birthdays and anniversaries, as well as seeing his grandson graduate from high school. He also said, “I have been able to see another KU basketball national championship and even a resurgence of the football team,” which he wasn’t sure if he would ever see! Finding time to do the little things like spending time with family and friends and taking time for fishing trips is part of the joy in the journey. He credits his wife Connie for being his constant support throughout his journey and recovery. “Having someone to encourage you, advocate for you, keep track of appointments and medications is immensely helpful!”

During his treatment, Steve reports that he was impressed by the dedication and knowledge of the staff at Stormont Vail Cotton O’Neil. “Advances are being made in the understanding of cancer and how to treat it at an ever-increasing rate and I was the beneficiary of one such advance. I went from having 3 months to live to being cancer free. I can’t say it was easy and I know that not all cancers can be treated as successfully as mine was.”



Tips for Caregivers During the Holidays

– Deborah Edelman-Dolan, LSCSW & Robin McKay, DNP, APRN, AOCNP

Often as our families age, we find ourselves in “caregiving” roles which can bring on new stresses, particularly around the holidays. These stresses may be compounded if you are also dealing with your own healthcare needs with more than 55% of caregivers reporting missing their own scheduled medical appointments due to caregiving needs. For many, caregiving during the holidays can lead to increased frustration rather than peace and goodwill. Here are some things to consider as the holidays approach to anticipate and address caregiving stress.

• Clear & Early Communication

- Let family & friends know early in the holiday season what limitations you anticipate regarding holiday traditions and gatherings.

• Share Your Wish List

- Remember the people who have said “If you need anything, let me know?” They usually mean it. Reach out to your support system and discuss how they can support you and your loved one during the holiday season.

• Schedule Self-Care

- From the day-to-day making sure you are getting rest when possible, good nutrition and hydration to the less frequent caregiving breaks outside of the house, be purposeful about taking care of yourself. Schedule times that someone can assist in caregiving so that you can treat yourself to something that recharges your battery on a regular basis.

• Utilize Your Resources

- If you need caregiving assistance and do not know where to turn, ASK! Your Cotton O’Neil providers and interdisciplinary care team have knowledge of community resources that may be of assistance to you and your loved ones!

It is ok to admit that you may not be able to do all of the things you may have done for the holidays in years past. The important thing is to identify your support system and communicate with them early and often. Please do not feel like you are on the journey alone and remember that being a caregiver is a marathon and not a sprint, so do not forget to recharge your battery for the journey. Reach out to your Cotton O’Neil team anytime for assistance!



Breast Cancer Patient Story — Erin Brady

At the age of 25, Erin certainly did not expect when she noted a strange dimple in her breast in the shower that it would be cancer. However, she did mention it to her mom, who as a histotechnologist for more than 30 years, was quite familiar with pathologists and work-up for breast cancer. Initially they suspected it was a fibroid, but Erin went to her primary care provider for further evaluation out of caution. From there, she was referred directly for an ultrasound and underwent biopsy that showed she had invasive ductal breast cancer.

Erin recalls being in shock when she heard the news, knowing in her mind that it was likely cancer, but having a panicked feeling about more than that. She had just accepted a new job at Hill’s Pet Nutrition as a quality engineer 2 weeks prior and was in the process of relocating from Nevada, Missouri to Topeka, Kansas. “How would it work with medical bills and transitioning insurance?” Erin remembers thinking. She felt that she couldn’t be worried about her health and taking care of herself when she needed to worry about how to finance cancer.

She recalls returning to her job at the time with 3M and bursting into tears when she saw an operator at the plant who she states will forever be in her heart because he hugged her and let her cry. When she was repeating, “What am I going to do,” he just simply said, “You’re going to take it one step at a time.” And that is what she did. Here is what Erin calls her “kill list” in getting rid of her cancer.

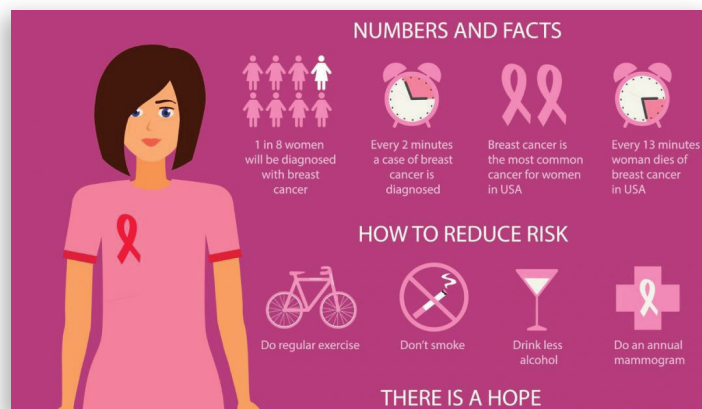


Erin’s Kill List

- 4 biopsies, some from Missouri and some when I came to my new job from Stormont Vail
- Mammogram
- Ovulation induction for egg harvesting
- Egg harvesting surgery
- Port placement surgery
- 4 bi-weekly rounds of Doxorubicin/Cytosan chemotherapy
- 12 weekly rounds of Taxol chemotherapy
- Bilateral mastectomy surgery
- Axillary dissection surgery
- 28 daily rounds of targeted radiation therapy
- (In Progress) 1 year of Herceptin/Perjeta infusions
- Monthly Zoladex injections

While her treatments are ongoing, she has gotten through many of the difficult parts. Erin reports that one of the biggest challenges has been the physical impact of getting the treatments with fatigue being the most prevalent symptom. The other very challenging thing for Erin is that, as a young woman, she was unprepared for how breast cancer treatment would impact her body for later in life. She tries to maintain a positive outlook, but notes that it is something she has to purposefully work on everyday so that she doesn’t “spiral deep into dark thoughts”. One of her biggest joys in the journey was getting to make jokes about her new breasts and never needing to wear a bra again. She says that she sometimes is amused with the “shock factor” when she makes a joke to someone about it. She also used humor to cope with losing her hair during chemotherapy and reports that she still uses the “I have cancer card” when she needs her boyfriend to do random tasks for her.

When asked if she had any advice for other patients, Erin says that you should, “sleep when you need it, and don’t feel bad about it”. She also recommends purposefully working on ways to have a positive outlook, and to stay organized by keeping EVERYTHING in a big binder: any paperwork from doctors, medical bills, insurance statements-Keep It! It will likely save you time down the road!



Breast Cancer Fast Facts

(Susan G. Komen Foundation)



Healthy Holiday Nutrition

Allison Gunnoe, RD

The holidays are a time of gathering for family, friends, and food. Sometimes, it can be overwhelming with the amount of food choices available at these gatherings. This time together should be enjoyable and we do not want to stress out and become hyper-focused over what we eat and what our weight is. However, there are some tips that can be followed during the holidays to ensure that we still maintain a healthy lifestyle. Even though there are a lot of delicious and tempting food options at holiday gatherings, it is important that we do not skip meals to save up calories to splurge on later. When we skip meals, we tend to overeat later on and end up consuming more calories than we intended. Another tip is to survey the food options before you grab a plate so you can plan out your food choices and determine portion sizes prior to going through the food line. You can also offer to bring a healthy dish to the gathering so you know that there will be at least one healthier option there for you to choose from. Make sure to be on the lookout for the fruits and veggies offered and try not to skip over them. Another tip is to skip the calorie dense beverages that do not offer much nutritional value. If there is a snack table, make sure to focus on visiting with people and move yourself away from the table to avoid mindless snacking. It is important to listen to your body. Eat slowly and eat until you are satisfied; we want to try to avoid overeating as there will likely be leftovers that you can enjoy as a meal the next day. Lastly, and most importantly, do not feel guilty for eating. If we accidentally overindulge ourselves, do not be hard on yourself. It is just a meal and we can get right back on track tomorrow.

Honey-Glazed Sweet Potatoes

Serves: 8

Ingredients

¼ cup water	Scant handful of chopped pecans or walnuts (toasted, if desired)
1 ½ T brown sugar	
1 ½ T honey	
1 T good-quality olive oil	Cracked black pepper
2 lbs sweet potatoes (about 4 large ones), sliced in half lengthwise and again crosswise	

Directions

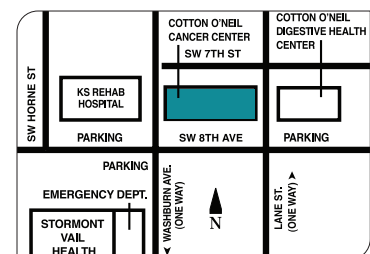
Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly coat 9- X 13-inch baking pan with cooking spray.

In small bowl, whisk together all ingredients (except potatoes, nuts, and pepper) until smooth. Pour into large plastic baggie and add potatoes. Mix thoroughly to coat. Empty baggie contents into baking pan.

Carefully place potatoes in a single layer with flesh of potato facing up. Cover and bake until fork tender, about 45 minutes. Turn sweet potatoes once or twice to prevent from sticking to pan.

When tender, remove cover and continue to bake until glaze is set, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a holiday serving dish and sprinkle nuts on top. Add pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Dietitians' 25 Favorite Holiday Recipes (todaysdietitian.com)



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