

# FOCUS FORWARD

## SUPPORT NOTES



**Meg Turner**  
Cancer Support  
Counselor

- *Do you love someone with cancer?*
- *Has anyone asked you how you are doing today?*
- *Is your own emotional and physical "well" full or do you find yourself scraping the sides for the last bit of moisture to give away?*

Taking care of "you" becomes vital to the new life and rhythm you and your loved one have found yourselves traveling. Studies show that a majority of caretakers do not care for themselves. However, those close to the loved one with cancer often experience the same fears, anxiety, sleeplessness, melancholy and existential questions.

Following are helpful reminders for taking care of "you":

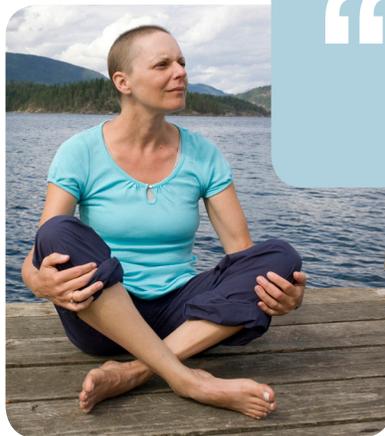
- Soften the harsh self-critic within. When you start telling yourself that you should be a better partner/child/friend...that you should be coping better...or should be able to juggle

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**Levine Cancer Institute**

1025 Morehead Medical Drive, Suite 600  
Charlotte, NC 28204



“ Either you run the day or the day runs you. ”

-Jim Rohn

## FEATURED PHYSICIAN



### NEW HOPE FOR STARTING A FAMILY AFTER CANCER

**Michelle Matthews, Director of Fertility Preservation** - Over 130,000 men and women in their reproductive years are diagnosed with cancer each year. With early detection and increasingly effective treatments, more patients are surviving cancer and want to start families. Exciting new advances have increased options for patients who want to preserve fertility prior to initiating cancer treatments that may otherwise leave them infertile.

To preserve fertility for men, sperm may be frozen prior to cancer treatment and stored for future use. Healthy pregnancies have been reported with sperm that has been stored for 20 years. For patients who do not store sperm prior to chemotherapy or radiation and subsequently have extremely low sperm counts, there are now techniques to obtain sperm directly from the testicle to use for achieving pregnancy through in vitro fertilization (IVF). IVF is a process where a woman's egg is fertilized with sperm outside the body and then transferred back into the uterus. This offers a man the opportunity to have a child using his own sperm if he did not store any prior to cancer treatment.

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## JOURNEY

# WELLNESS



## BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

**Vish Raj, MD, Associate Medical Director, Carolinas Rehabilitation and Director of Cancer Rehabilitation** - When individuals suffering from cancer feel tired, practitioners often recommend rest as the primary treatment. However, this may have an unintended effect on wellness.

Some individuals become even weaker with rest, leading to further deconditioning and fatigue. One of the best ways to promote wellness is physical activity and exercise.

Studies have shown that therapeutic exercise can improve endurance, strength and energy levels for individuals dealing with oncological diagnoses. In addition, exercise helps reduce the risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, obesity and osteoporosis, all of which can be detrimental for survivorship. Positive benefits have been noted in reducing depression and anxiety, as well as other forms of cancer.

Prior to beginning any exercise program, individuals should check with their physician to make sure they are physically safe for activity. For those who can engage in physical activity, emphasis should be placed on cardiovascular and strength training. Aerobic exercise for at least 20 minutes a day has positive benefits on heart health, mood and stamina.

Exercise options include walking, bicycling and swimming. Strength training can aid with a person's ability to perform daily activities and provide the psychological and physical support to take on daily challenges. Strength can be improved with progressive resistance exercises using free weights, machines or resistance bands. Stretching prior to and after activities may help to promote flexibility while preventing injury. Consultation with a physiatrist, or physical and occupational therapist for exercise prescription may be a good first step in promoting continued wellness for the cancer patient.

*To contact the Outpatient Cancer Rehabilitation Program at Carolinas Rehabilitation, call 704-355-3558*

Espiritu, N.G. (2009) Therapeutic Exercise in Cancer. In M.D. Stubblefield & M.W. O'Dell (Eds.), *Cancer Rehabilitation Principles and Practice* (p. 803-812). New York: Demos.

**Carolinas Cancer Wellness Program**

An 8-week program designed to assist in managing the physical side effects of cancer for survivors during treatment or recovery.

To learn more about this program, call **704-716-6150**.

# SUPPORT NOTES

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all the balls (caretaking, job, family, etc.)...you become weighed down with guilt and shame which burdens your heart and slows your progress. Get rid of the word “should”.

- Be you! Your loved one has been diagnosed with cancer. This does not mean you are expected to reinvent your relationship and become something you are not.

- Don't try to guess what your loved one needs or wants. This can lead to misunderstandings and feelings of frustration. Communication is key...so ask!

- Listen! You need not to have all the answers or solutions to every challenge. Sometimes it helps to just sit with the tears (his/hers and yours) in silence and without judgment.

- When friends and family offer to help, let them.

- Take care of yourself physically. Drink plenty of fluids, exercise (even just 10 or 15 minutes) and eat healthy foods.

- Every day, include activities that bring you comfort, such as listening to music, meditation and prayer.

- Don't isolate. Recharging alone can be helpful and healing. However, be mindful that too much alone time can lead to feelings of melancholy and anxiety. While your loved one may need a caregiver...they also need the relationship that was there before the cancer diagnosis.

*To schedule an appointment with a Counselor or Social Worker, call 704-355-2884.*



## GENETIC COUNSELING



**Brook White ScM, CGC, Genetic Counselor** - Much thought and research has been devoted to the question, “What causes cancer?” Often, there is no simple answer. Factors such as gender, age, environment and family history may affect a person’s risk.

Five to 10 percent of cancer is inherited— caused by differences, or mutations, in a person’s genetic code. Everyone has mutations, some of which make a person more high risk for developing cancer.

It is important to know if a cancer is inherited. Because mutations can mean greater risk for developing cancer, some people may choose increased cancer screening or surgery. Genetic information is also important to family members, as mutations can be passed from parent to child. Cancer treatment plans may be altered for individuals recently diagnosed with cancer.

Not everyone will benefit from genetic testing. Genetic counselors are healthcare providers who help doctors and patients determine who would benefit from genetic testing. Levine Cancer Institute has four cancer genetic counselors who are master’s level professionals certified or eligible through the American Board of Genetic Counselors.

*To schedule an appointment with a Genetic Counselor, call 704-381-6810.*

# NUTRITION TIPS



**Meredith Byrne, RD, CSO, LDN**

**Oncology Dietitian** - I am commonly asked, "Should I eat meat?" Research has shown us that eating high amounts of red meat (pork, beef, lamb, and goat), as well as processed meat, can increase the risk of some cancers. At this time, it is recommended to consume no more than 11oz of red meat per week and to rarely eat processed meat.



What is processed meat? By common definition, processed meat means that it has been preserved by smoking, curing, salting, or adding chemical preservatives.

*Following are processed meats:*

Deli/lunch meats • Corned beef • Pepperoni  
Salami • Hot dogs • Ham • Sausage • Bacon

*How do we limit the amount of processed and red meat in our diet?*

- At meals, choose plant-based proteins such as kidney, pinto, lentil, black beans, peas, nuts and seeds instead of meat.

- Experiment with meatless options such as tofu or hummus on a sandwich.
- Instead of bacon or sausage with your breakfast, choose Greek yogurt or egg whites for protein.
- Replace the pepperoni or sausage on your pizza with a vegetable.
- Purchase fresh, whole cuts of lean meat such as boneless, skinless chicken breast.
- Try tuna or a sliced piece of roasted chicken on your sandwich instead of deli meat.
- Replace deli meat in a chef salad with beans, nuts or a piece of baked fish.
- At cookouts, choose chicken, if it is available, instead of a hot dog. Enjoy side dishes such as baked beans, fresh fruit and pasta salad instead of a second piece of meat.
- If you do choose to purchase lunch meats, have the deli slice them for you behind the counter instead of purchasing them vacuum-packed.

*Following the recommendations of a plant-based diet, this vegetarian burrito recipe provides nutrition from different vegetables as well as protein from beans! You won't even miss the meat!*

## Vegetarian Burrito

**Ingredients:**

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon chipotle chile powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 (15-ounce) can organic black beans, drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can organic kidney beans, drained
- 3 tablespoons refrigerated fresh salsa
- 6 (10-inch) 100% whole wheat tortillas
- 1 cup (4 ounces) Mexican blend cheese
- 1 1/2 cups chopped plum tomato (about 3)
- 1 1/2 cups shredded romaine lettuce
- 6 tablespoons thinly sliced green onions
- 6 tablespoons light sour cream

**Preparation:**

1. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add garlic to pan; cook 1 minute, stirring frequently. Stir in chile powder and salt; cook 30 seconds, stirring constantly. Stir in 1/3 cup water and beans; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in salsa. Partially mash bean mixture with a fork.
2. Warm tortillas according to package directions. Spoon about 1/3 cup bean mixture into center of each tortilla. Top each serving with about 2 1/2 tablespoons cheese, 1/4 cup tomato, 1/4 cup lettuce, 1 tablespoon onions, and 1 tablespoon sour cream; roll up.

**Adapted from:**

Maureen Callahan, *Cooking Light*  
JANUARY 2010

# PATIENT NAVIGATION

## NOW WHAT?



**Cassandra H. Horsley, RN, BSN, Lung Program Navigator** - Nurse navigators have essential roles in guiding cancer patients through their cancer journey. This journey begins at the time of diagnosis and continues throughout treatment. While there

is much support for cancer patients during the journey, they can be left feeling alone after it is complete.

Cancer survivorship begins at diagnosis and extends throughout a patient's life. Although completing cancer treatment brings relief, there are many concerns and questions of how to get back to "normal". Follow-up care, managing the physical changes after treatment and support to deal with emotional symptoms are concerns that help survivors deal with the "what now".

Nurse navigators play an integral role in the survivorship journey. Establishing follow-up visits to address physical and emotional changes, and identifying new barriers and fears of recurrence reinforce the connection of navigators and survivors. The "what now" can be addressed by continuing a supportive environment that helps a survivor get back to normal.

Follow-up care is important for cancer survivors. Even though cancer treatment may be complete, there is often a continued feeling of loss of control. Following are questions patients and families can ask their healthcare providers to recapture a sense of control and become actively involved with healthcare choices.

- How long will it take me to recuperate and feel like myself again?
- Which healthcare providers do I need to see?
- How often should I follow up with my doctors?
- What specific tests do I need and how often?
- What symptoms should I report to my doctor?

*For more information about our nurse navigator program, contact Levine Cancer Institute at 704-355-2884.*



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REhope

704-446-5110

While men continually produce new sperm, women are born with all of the eggs they will ever develop. Cancer treatments for a woman often permanently deplete her supply of eggs, resulting in early menopause. Although sperm are relatively easy to freeze prior to cancer treatment, freezing eggs is more difficult and was not effective until recently. However, exciting advances in fertility preservation have expanded options for women. Over 900 pregnancies have been reported using a new and effective technique to freeze eggs called "vitrification". Vitrification is a freezing technique that results in approximately 90 percent of eggs surviving the process. Pregnancies have also been established by freezing portions of the ovary prior to cancer treatment and then transplanting them back after completing chemotherapy or radiation. Although this technique is still in development, it may allow patients to conceive naturally and holds significant promise for the future.

A diagnosis of cancer can be overwhelming and not all patients elect to preserve sperm or eggs prior to initiating cancer treatment. Fortunately, options are available after cancer to help patients conceive naturally or with assistance. For many patients, simply understanding how cancer impacts fertility can empower them to make decisions that provide hope for their future.

# INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY

## BEGINNING THE HEALING PROCESS



**Bridget S. Bongaard, MD, FACP, FIM, Chief of Integrative Medicine, CMC-NE** -

Survivorship starts at the time of diagnosis. That is an important mindset...to have the vision for wellness and not disease.

How do we help you summon your courage and strength, and rebuild a well of strength and reserve to use for healing? You have what is needed inside you already, but as part of your Integrative Oncology team, we partner with you to accelerate the healing process by teaching you good nutrition, important self-care skills, helping with the mental and spiritual mindset to get the job done with the use of Integrative Medicine techniques. Each program is a learning chapter in itself, but in this issue we will focus on the body-mind connection.

Most patients receiving a diagnosis of cancer go through great emotional shock: grief, anger and denial, finally achieving some level of acceptance as the life threatening experience of a cancer diagnosis is digested and metabolized psychologically. The impact of the patient's mental and spiritual health affects not only immediate, but also long-term outcomes, including recurrence and survival.

Many factors influence mental health outlook in the cancer patient at the time of diagnosis. It is important to identify the initial degree of the person's psychological hardiness and resilience as this provides the base of strength and coping skills for the disease-related challenges.



## FINDING RESOURCES

**MELISSA WHEELER LCSW, Patient Navigator** - Like so many others during challenging economic times after being laid off from his construction company job, Derrick found himself in search of a way to pay the bills and keep food on the table. He opted to start

his own home improvement business and, although quite successful, he never got around to finding health insurance. So, when the shocking diagnosis of cancer came, Derrick found himself scrambling to pay for care. He thought his cancer would keep him from getting insured and even considered not having treatment at all.

Sound familiar? Many cancer patients have found themselves in the same devastating situation, with a "pre-existing condition" that makes them uninsurable or facing high health insurance premiums to cover their care. Now, Derrick and patients like him have found hope with special state legislature programs called Health Insurance High Risk Pools. Each state runs their program differently; though most generally function as a non-profit organization governed by a board. The program typically contracts with a previously well-established private health insurance provider to administer benefits and collect premiums. Plans are based on competitive market rates and offer benefits similar to most basic private insurance.

The North Carolina High Risk Health Insurance Pool (NCHIRP) was established in 2007 as a program called Inclusive Health. The program

Treatment-related alterations of body image, disturbance of sexual/intimate relationships, ability to cope with treatment side effects— which can include fatigue, anxiety, depression, insomnia, vasomotor symptoms and cognitive dysfunction greatly influence quality of life and function.

In a study done by Groenvold et al 2007, the question was raised as to whether psychological distress in newly diagnosed breast cancer patients was associated with survival. Analysis of 1,588 patients beginning two months after their primary operation and extending 12.9 years, showed that low levels of emotional distress and low fatigue independently predicted longer recurrence-free and overall survival, after controlling for tumor biological factors. There was a positive clinical correlation with longer recurrence-free survival and less anxiety, while overall healthy emotional function remained a significant indicator of overall survival. Low levels of fatigue also independently predicted longer recurrence-free survival. Thus, it is important for patients and their doctors to address these symptoms and create effective strategies for treatment.

In the next issue, we will talk about how mental stress (anxiety, depression and psychological trauma) affects the body's healing powers and ability to overthrow cancerous cells invasion. We will also begin to teach you to utilize integrative medicine techniques to capitalize on improving immune function and tumor surveillance with use of stress reduction techniques.

*To schedule an appointment with Dr. Bongaard, call 704-403-7050.*

provides health insurance coverage to North Carolinians who do not have access to an employer health plan and have been denied coverage for pre-existing medical conditions, or who have been offered coverage with a conditional rider or at a very high rate." There are two coverage options: Inclusive Health Federal Option for those who have been uninsured for more than six months, and the Inclusive Health State Option for everyone else. Varying criteria and premiums exist for each option and financial assistance is available for those who may struggle with the cost. The premium subsidy program, called IH Assist, offers substantial discounts from 20-40 percent based on income and household size.

High risk health insurance pools ensure that Derrick and patients like him can easily find coverage and focus on what really matters: getting well. Levine Cancer Institute staff recognize the importance of assisting patients with access to the care they need to get well. Our team of experienced social workers, financial counselors and an American Cancer Society Patient Resource Navigator are available to answer questions and provide guidance on high risk pool and other insurance resources that may be an option.

*For information on high risk pools and other potential insurance options call 704-355-2884 and ask to be connected with a support team members or visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov). To learn more about the Inclusive Health Program in North Carolina, visit [www.inclusivehealth.org](http://www.inclusivehealth.org).*

# Support Groups, Programs and Activities

## CMC

### BREAST RECONSTRUCTION FORUM

A place for education and support

**Location:** CMC Cosmetic & Plastic Surgery  
1025 Morehead Medical Plaza  
Suite 300  
Charlotte, NC 28204

**Contact:** Chistin Harrison, 704-446-6810

### CAROLINA BREAST FRIENDS

A positive environment for women with breast cancer through education, encouragement and friendship.

**Location:** 1607 E. Morehead St.  
Charlotte, NC 28207  
Call 704-942-8202

**Contact:** Meg Turner, 704-355-7283  
meg.turner@carolinashealthcare.org

### CAROLINAS CANCER WELLNESS PROGRAM

An 8-week program designed to assist in managing the physical side effects of cancer for survivors during treatment or recovery.

**Contact:** 704-716-6150.

### HISPANIC BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP— ¡EN ESPAÑOL!

Targeted to meet the needs of hispanic women with breast cancer.

**Location:** Morehead Medical Plaza  
Blumenthal Cancer Center

**Contact:** Magbis Love, 704-446-1548

### GROCERY STORE TOURS

Join us for a free grocery store tour guided by a dietician.

**Location:** Area Grocery Stores  
**Contact:** Meredith Byrne, 704-355-8237

### KIDNEY CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

**Location:** Morehead Medical Plaza  
Blumenthal Cancer Center

**Contact:** Adrian Thornburg, 704-446-1345

### LIVING WITH CANCER

A support group for anyone with cancer. Friends and family are also invited.

**Location:** Morehead Medical Plaza  
Blumenthal Cancer Center

**Contact:** Meg Turner, 704-355-7283  
meg.turner@carolinashealthcare.org

### LOOK GOOD... FEEL BETTER

Is free and open to any women undergoing treatment for cancer. Trained cosmetologists use makeup, wigs and scarves to help women cope and adjust to the side effects of treatment.

**Location:** Morehead Medical Plaza  
Blumenthal Cancer Center

**Contact:** Meg Turner, 704-355-7283  
meg.turner@carolinashealthcare.org

### LARYNGECTOMY SUPPORT GROUP

Greater Charlotte Chatterboxes Laryngectomy Support Group

**Location:** Carolinas Rehabilitation  
1100 Blythe Blvd.,  
Charlotte, NC 28207

**Contact:** Samantha Jones, 704-355-4347

### NUTRITION FOR WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER

A nutrition class designed specifically for women with breast cancer. Learn more about what you should be eating and clear up common misconceptions.

**Location:** Morehead Medical Plaza  
Blumenthal Cancer Center

**Contact:** Dana Ingoglia, 704-446-5171

### OVARIAN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

**Location:** Morehead Medical Plaza  
Blumenthal Cancer Center

**Contact:** Meg Turner, 704-355-7283  
meg.turner@carolinashealthcare.org

### WRITING CLASS

A writing group created to honor the experiences of living with cancer.

**Location:** Blumenthal Cancer Center  
**Contact:** Meg Turner, 704-355-7283  
meg.turner@carolinashealthcare.org

## CMC-NORTHEAST (cont.)

### CHANGING THE FACE OF CANCER

For cancer survivors and caregivers coping with an advanced cancer diagnosis.

**Location:** Batte Cancer Center

**Contact:** Cora Davis, 704-403-1055

### CAREGIVERS CONNECTION

An opportunity for caregivers to connect informally, relax and take a break.

**Location:** Batte Cancer Center

**Contact:** Cora Davis, 704-403-1055

### BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

For individuals and families coping with a new diagnosis of breast cancer.

**Location:** Batte Cancer Center

**Contact:** Cindy Wise, 704-403-2392

### TOOLS FOR CANCER

A hands on skills class for dealing with the changing circumstances of life.

**Location:** Batte Cancer Center

**Contact:** April M. Carroll, 704-403-2129

## CMC-PINEVILLE

### NUTRITION FOR WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER

A nutrition class designed specifically for women with breast cancer. Learn more about what you should be eating and clear up common misconceptions.

**Location:** Levine Cancer Institute

**Contact:** Meredith Byrne 704-355-8237

## CMC-UNION

### LOOK GOOD... FEEL BETTER

For more information about CMC-Union support groups, contact: Donna C. Little, Oncology Program Manager/Patient Navigator  
704-283-3265 or dlittle@carolinas.org

## CMC-NORTHEAST

### CHEMO 101

A class for newly diagnosed patients designed to educate them about cancer, chemotherapy and improving their overall experience.

**Location:** Batte Cancer Center

**Contact:** April M. Carroll, 704-403-2129

### "2-YOUNG" SUPPORT GROUP

A group for young patients.

**Location:** Please Call for Location

**Contact:** April M. Carroll, 704-403-2129  
or Cora Davis, 704-403-1055

To subscribe to this newsletter, visit:

[www.carolinashealthcare.org/focusforwardsignup](http://www.carolinashealthcare.org/focusforwardsignup)



Levine Cancer Institute is changing the course of cancer care by removing barriers that separate patients from access to world-class research and breakthrough treatments. The Institute's mission will take cancer care to a new level in the Carolinas, providing:

- Convenient access to quality cancer care
- Easier participation in clinical trials evaluating the latest cancer care treatments and approaches
- New and advanced cancer programs, state-of-the-art equipment and treatment protocols
- Recruitment of nationally-recognized cancer care experts
- Patient navigators who provide support and guidance through every step of cancer detection, treatment and healing

Levine Cancer Institute will strive to be recognized by cancer patients, their families, referring physicians and the communities served by Carolinas HealthCare System as the first choice provider for cancer care.

HOPE

OPENING  
OCTOBER 2012

For more information on Levine Cancer Institute visit [www.levinecancerinstitute.org](http://www.levinecancerinstitute.org) or call 704-355-2884.



Levine Cancer Institute

[www.levinecancerinstitute.org](http://www.levinecancerinstitute.org)