

## **HOW TO REACH US**

If you have any suggestions for topics, articles or just need to talk to us, please feel free to contact us. You can reach **LET'S TALK..... NEWSLETTER** at Forum Health's Cancer CareCenters by calling (330) 884-4152 or (800) 222-4603.

## **HANDLING THE HOLIDAYS**

*Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, OCN, CPDS*

Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's Day all represent a season that is filled with thankfulness, joy and hope. This holiday season can serve as a marker in time, a period filled with expectations, obligations, memories of the past and hopes and dreams for the future. At the same time, we are overwhelmed by messages about the ideal holiday. These messages usually speak of the "perfect family in the perfect setting." However, most people find that the holidays are less than ideal and filled with increased stress. We are all vulnerable to this stress due to over commitment during the season, with too much to do and too little time to do it.

When coping with a cancer diagnosis, the holidays can be even more emotionally charged. The degree of emotion can depend on where you are in terms of diagnosis, treatment and survivorship. Cancer-related fatigue and the added stress of the holidays may feel overwhelming.

It is important to realize your limitations and be gentle with yourself. It can be a time to re-evaluate priorities and decide together with your family what is truly important and meaningful and what can be set aside. Make decisions with your family about which traditions to uphold and what might need to change. It may be a time to start new traditions! Having others help or even take over specific tasks can help to reduce pressure. Delegating specific jobs to someone else is acceptable.

For those with young children in the home, it is important to hear from them what their expectations are. Explain that everything might not be the same as it has been in the past. Help them anticipate what will be different and new about the holidays this year. Allow flexibility for their needs to be met. Try to understand their special needs and try to honor what is important to them, if it is reasonable.

Once you set some limits and communicate with your family, you can make changes in how you usually do things. Some things can be eliminated entirely. Other traditions may feel too important to give up. Gift shopping may be one tradition that seems too overwhelming, but may be tough to give up. Delegating the job or parts of the job or using catalog or internet shopping could be an option. If you really want to do the shopping, wait for one of your better days to come along. Making a list can help you remain focused, and organized.

Focus on the meaning and comfort of the holidays. Helping others or letting others help you may enhance your holiday. If you are out of active treatment and a few years into survivorship, volunteering a few hours or making a contribution to a personally significant organization may provide added meaning to the season.

If you find that your mood is down, it may be time to seek extra support and help. There are many resources of help including support groups, clergy, private counselors and therapists and social workers. Don't hesitate to seek help if you feel anxious, depressed or have sad feelings. This holiday season may be even more emotional because our nation is grieving the losses incurred from the September 11, 2001 tragedy.

Remember, that the holiday season is yours to experience, celebrate and reflect upon. It is all the more reason to be gentle with yourselves and others.

May you have a blessed, happy and peaceful Holiday Season.

## **THE CONNECTION BETWEEN STRESS AND PAIN**

*Written by Pam Stephenson, RN, MSN, CS, OACN< CHPN*

Many people with chronic pain have complained of their pain being out of control since the terrorist attack of September 11. This pain can include anything from cancer pain to arthritis or migraines. The reason for these pains can be from either physical or mental stress. For example, imagine a time when you were under extreme stress. Do you tense your muscles or clench your jaw. The effects of this tension over time can cause muscle and joints to ache. The anxiety related to stress can

cause headaches as well. Perhaps worries about this situation have interfered with sleep.

If you have talked to your doctor and are sure that the increase in your pain is not due to other medical problems, there are some things that you can do to help that does not involve medicine.

- ) Spend time with other people. Coping with stressful events is easier when people support each other.
- ) If it helps, talk about how you are feeling. Be willing to listen to others who need to talk about how they feel.
- ) Get back to your everyday routines. Familiar habits can be very comforting.
- ) Take time to grieve and cry if you need to. To feel better in the long run, you need to let these feelings out instead of pushing them away or hiding them.
- ) Ask for support and help from your family, friends, church, or other community resources. Join or develop support groups.
- ) Set small goals to tackle big problems. Take one thing at a time instead of trying to do everything at once.
- ) Eat healthy food and take time to walk, stretch, exercise, and relax, even if just for a few minutes at a time.
- ) Make sure you get enough rest and sleep. You may need more sleep than usual when you are very stressed.
- ) Do something that just feels good to you like taking a warm bath, taking a walk, sitting in the sun, or petting your cat or dog.
- ) If you are trying to do too much, try to cut back by putting off or giving up a few things that are not absolutely necessary.
- ) Find something positive you can do. Give blood. Donate money to help victims of the attack. Join efforts in your community to respond to this tragedy.
- ) Get away from the stress of the event sometimes. Turn off the TV news reports and distract yourself by doing something you enjoy.

-Taken from the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.



## **IMPROVING YOUR CHILD'S INTAKE DURING CANCER TREATMENT**

*Written by Shelly Watson, RD, LD, CDE*

Good nutrition is vital for the child with cancer to prevent malnutrition, reverse nutritional deficits, promote growth and development, maximize quality of life, and possibly improve the tolerance of cancer treatments. Children who are well nourished are better able to fight sickness and infection.

Encouraging oral intake in children with cancer can be a challenge at times. Children, by nature, can sometimes be picky eaters and the methods of treating cancer can produce side effects that reduce the ability or desire to eat.

Below are some helpful tips for promoting better intake:

- Make meal times calm and relaxed (don't hurry meals).
- Using colorful place settings and varied colors and textures of food to help create a pleasant meal atmosphere.
- Try positive reinforcement such as praising good eating, using small rewards (e.g., a new toy), graphing the child's daily intake with attractive stickers, or planning food related activities.
- Provide for individual food choices, especially during times when intake is best and food aversions are least likely to occur. Save "favorite foods" for times when the child is feeling well. Trying to force these foods in an attempt to improve intake when the child is nauseated may cause a permanent dislike of the food because they associate it with "being sick."
- Let the child eat whenever hungry. Offer food throughout the day and at bedtime. Nutritious (hi-calorie/hi-protein) between meal snacks should be part of the daily meal plan such as meats, peanut butter, vegetables or fruit.
- If your child is having eating problems make every bite count! Taking even a few small bites or sips of high calorie, high protein foods and liquids every hour or so can help to improve intake quite a bit.
- If needed, talk with your physician or dietitian about the use of supplements or other ideas to improve nutrient intake.

The good news is that even children with eating problems have days when eating is a pleasure.

With understanding and a positive approach, you can help your child get the nutrition they need.

## **SURVIVING THE HOSPITAL STAYS- CAREGIVER STYLE**

*By Cathy Kajut, MSW, LSW*

You have your family member all packed and organized for the next treatment days at the hospital. Now it is your turn. Yes, it is time to pack for your needs. Keep the following list posted in your home and car for future reference. Keep a bag available only for your use, so you do not have to reorganize yourself each time you enter the hospital or have day long treatment days. When under intense mental, emotional, and physical stress, you easily lose sight of your needs, and end up extremely frustrated, sad, and even sick.

Notice that you need to plan for your five senses: taste, smell, touch, hearing, and seeing. Pamper all your senses when under stress and also think about your physical outlets. Consider isometric exercise like rocking in one of our rocking chairs, walking briskly in the halls (the first floor goes the length of the hospital and is great for a power walk).

Materials needed for the caregiver:

- \ Bag/luggage that is not to be used for anything else
- \ Notebook, pen/pencil, tape
- \ Toiletries, favorite lotions, cologne
- \ Disc or tape player and headphones, and your favorite types of music, books on tape, relaxation tape, etc.
- \ Videos (if you have access to a VCR)
- \ Phone card
- \ Few favorite snacks, favorite soft drink or even a thermos for hot drinks
- \ Address and phone list of family and friends
- \ Copy of insurance information, contact numbers of your physicians and hospitals
- \ Photos that bring smiles to your face
- \ Change of clothes, comfy shoes or slippers
- \ Single size waffle pad for the pull out chair and even a favorite pillow
- \ Some type of project or maybe that book you have been wanting to read
- \ Flashlight to read by or see by when patient sleeping
- \ Games you and patient may enjoy

Aim to take care of yourself, as well as your family member. Remember, we value you as a team member. If you need extra help, support or other creative ways to pamper yourself call

Cathy Kajut (330) 884-4190, Mary Morris (330) 884-4189 or Mary Handzlik (330) 841-9011 Ext. 127  
Forum Health Social Services.

## **THE CARE-A-VAN**

*Written by Mary C. Morris, LSW, Adult Oncology Social Worker*

Did you know the CancerCare Centers at both Northside Medical Center and Trumbull Memorial Hospital have access to a van that will assist with transportation? The van is provided for those patients, at either facility, who do not have a family member available to assist with transportation for office visits, radiation treatments, and/or chemotherapy.

Rides can be scheduled through Mary Handzlik, LSW, Trumbull Memorial, (330) 841-9011, Ext. 127, or Mary Morris, LSW, Northside Medical Center, (330) 884-4189. Rides are free of charge and subject to some availability. The Care-A-Van is wheelchair accessible however, a radiation patient would need to be able to leave the wheelchair and climb onto the treatment table with a minimum amount of assistance from the staff. Patients must also be able to manage their own oxygen, or have a family member who is able to do so.

Please call if you have questions, or need assistance.

## **HAVE YOU SEEN THE “CLEAR RIBBON?”**

*Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, OCN, CHES, CPDS*

During the month of November, the Cancer CareCenter did a lung cancer awareness campaign at the Eastwood Mall in Niles and the Steinmart Store in Boardman. The purpose of these events was to provide awareness to our community by handing out information and pinning on clear ribbon lapel pins to represent the “invisible” population of people with lung cancer. Materials for our event were provided by ALCASE. The Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support and Education (ALCASE) was formed in 1995 to provide support and services for people living with lung cancer. Like many people with cancer, lung cancer survivors feel isolated. In addition, there is a stigma attached to lung cancer. “You must have smoked. You did this

to yourself." This pervasive attitude is fostered by the tobacco companies and most importantly, ignores how addictive tobacco is. The Cancer CareCenter and ALCASE know first hand how devastating this stigma can be. They have heard it from survivors and their families and the ALCASE hotline. This hotline takes calls from men and women who are too ashamed to tell family and friends that they have lung cancer.

ALCASE's objectives are:

- \To provide increased awareness about issues surrounding prevention, diagnosis, treatment and living with lung cancer
- \To provide support, which is known to improve the quality of life for most people living with cancer
- \To educate people about lung cancer and how best to live with the disease

ALCASE provides most services free of charge. The toll free telephone hotline is (800) 298-2436 and is a direct link to information, materials, referrals or just a shoulder to cry on. The web site is [www.alcase.org](http://www.alcase.org). There is also a "phone buddy support program" that matches survivor with survivor for peer-to-peer support. ALCASE also publishes a quarterly newsletter called *Spirit and Breath*, which is filled with helpful information. The organization has many written resources that may be helpful to you and your family, including, *The Lung Cancer Manual*, a 200 page comprehensive guide to lung cancer, its treatment and supportive care written for those with lung cancer and their families.

Remember, you don't have to do this alone. Here is another great resource available to you. Take advantage of what is out there. Call today!



## **TOMORROW WE'LL RISE**

*Written by Brenda M. Rider*

Words offer little explanation  
Of the events endured by this great nation.

The evil that lies within our borders,  
Have melted steel and pulverized mortar.

The devastation we know as ground zero

Will pay tribute to every American hero.

When the dust and debris are finally clear  
Our reaction is one no longer of fear.

A quiet anger rumbles within  
Wondering if they'll strike again.

The American spirit is not lost  
Our freedom paid at such a cost.

Unite a people with pride so true  
In vivid colors of red, white and blue.

We stand tall and roll up our sleeves  
Testing our faith to believe.

For every American who sheds a tear  
The emotion lasting and holding dear.

Today we are focused on another war  
Tomorrow we'll rise to do much more.

## **RECIPE**

### ***Easy Bean and Pasta Supper***

(Serves 4 to 6)

Make an entire meal in 30 minutes by serving this with steamed broccoli.

- 1/2 pound ground turkey
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1-1/2 cups dry macaroni
- 2-1/2 cups low sodium broth
- 1 15-ounce can low-sodium kidney beans, drained
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes (about 3 medium)
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese



- 1) Brown ground meat in a Dutch oven. Drain off fat. Add onion and garlic and cook until onion is translucent.
- 2) Turn heat to low and mix in macaroni, broth, beans, tomatoes, and spices.
- 3) Cover the pan and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring once or twice during cooking.
- 4) Remove from heat and sprinkle on grated cheese. Cover and let the cheese melt before serving.

*Nutrient Analysis (per serving): Calories 253, Fat 7g., 25% of calories from fat, Saturated Fat 2g, Sodium 450 mg, Fiber 5 gm.*

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*This "healthy eating recipe" may help prevent disease and maintain your health.*