

The Shepard Lantern

Cancer Center News

Summer 2009

Inside this issue:

Shepard's Paws..... 1 & 5

Food for Thought..... 2-3

Survivor's Day 3

Ask the Chemotherapy Nurse..... 4

Doctor's Corner 6

Journal Donations 6

Art Cart Donation 7

Complementary Therapies..... 7

Clinical Trials..... 7

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Shepard's Paws

Pam Shadle, Director of Marketing, Public Relations & Development



When Lalla Sidbury was diagnosed with cancer in 2000 she had no idea how her diagnosis would positively impact the lives of other cancer patients in the future. Lalla and her chocolate lab, Kasey are the newest volunteers here at the Cancer Center. Lalla and Kasey began visiting with patients in the chemo bay the first week of June as part of our newest complementary therapy program – Shepard's Paws.

In 2002, when Lalla's cancer returned Dr. Crews recommended that she take an early retirement and focus on her health. After an 18-year career as Human Resources Manager with the City of Washington, Lalla was uncertain how she would adjust to not working. "The secret to my adjustment came in the form of a beautiful chocolate lab named Toby," said Sidbury. "My husband, Forest recommended that I get a dog to help keep me company after I retired and as I was going through treatment. Toby went with me everywhere; my life was wrapped up in spending time with him." Unfortunately she lost Toby in 2004, but Sidbury immediately started searching for another dog and was blessed to find Kasey.

Continued on page 5



Food For Thought

Keeping Your Food on a Curfew...Keeping Your Food Safe

Laurel McKenzie, RD, LDN

Yes, your food needs parental supervision. There are rules about how long it can be out and what other foods it can 'hang out' with in the shopping cart and cutting board (to keep it from picking up others' germs or bad habits). These rules keep you and those you care for safe from food borne illness. As a cancer patient, you may develop a weakened immune system from the side effects of treatment



or from the disease process itself. When functioning normally, our immune system helps rid our body of dangerous bacteria, toxins and viruses. Food contains bacteria or other pathogens. Summer temperatures, unsafe food handling, and a weakened immune system can become a recipe for trouble. Bacteria need food, time and temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit to multiply rapidly and make toxins that make us sick. Since food borne illness can be serious- or even fatal in a healthy person- paying attention to food temperatures and how long food is out of proper refrigeration is a wise choice.

Cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the temperature of your refrigerator is 40° F degrees or below at all times. Avoid leaving food out beyond two hours of cooking and it is helpful to divide large

batches into smaller containers so they cool off before the bacteria multiply too much.

Before we start our shopping trip, we are counting on the grower, harvester, processor, transporter, warehouse and grocery store (other parental-types) to keep the bacteria in our foods to a minimum. Once we put the food into our cart, the job is up to us. Here are a few tips to becoming a better shopper.

- Always read the labels for the 'sell by' date. Never purchase foods beyond this date. (Think of this as a curfew.)
- While you're shopping, put raw packaged meat, poultry, or seafood into a plastic bag before placing it in the shopping cart so that its juices will not drip on and contaminate the other foods. (This keeps your food from 'mixing' with the 'wrong crowd'.)
- Buy only pasteurized milk, cheese and other dairy products from the refrigerated sections. When buying fruit juice from the refrigerated section of the store, be sure that the juice label says it is pasteurized. This means it has been heat-treated to kill bacteria. (Think of this as it had good rearing.)
- Purchase eggs in the shell from the refrigerated section of the store. For recipes that call for eggs that are raw or undercooked when the dish is served (Caesar salad dressing and homemade ice cream are two examples) use either shell eggs that have been treated to destroy Salmonella by pasteurization, or pasteurized egg products, like Egg Beaters, for example.
- When purchasing canned goods, make sure that they are free of dents, cracks, or bulging lids. Once home, remember to clean each lid before opening the can.
- Pick up perishable foods at the end of the shopping trip and plan to go directly home from the grocery store. (How many times have you told your children to come straight home to stay out of trouble?)
- Always refrigerate perishable foods within two hours of purchasing.
- When the outside temperature is above 90° F, refrigerate



your food within one hour of purchasing.

- In hot weather, take a cooler with ice or blue cold packs in case you have an unexpected delay getting home.
- Using the foil-like, reflective insulated bags for sale in the ice cream section may be helpful as well for produce.

When taking food to a summer cookout or to a loved one who is undergoing cancer treatments, we must attend to food temperatures while the food is in route. Remember, the danger zone in which bacteria grows most rapidly is between 40 and 140° F.

- Keep cold food cold, at 40° F or below. To be safest, place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs.
- For cookouts, serving dishes of cold foods can be set in a shallow container of ice.
- Hot food should be kept hot at 140° F or above. Wrap the food well and place in an insulated container. If the dish will not be eaten within the two-hour window, go ahead and place it in the refrigerator for your friend.
- For cookouts, if the food is expected to be out more than one hour in 90° weather (two hours in cooler weather), use a crock pot with an extension cord and electrical outlet to keep food safe.
- Once food has been in the danger zone (40-140° F) for two hours, it should be thrown away. (There is no rehabilitation program for this troubled food.)

When it comes to food safety, we know it is always better safe than sorry. Our bodies are magnificent creations and are capable of keeping us from much harm; but it can only do so much, especially when we are not our healthiest. Keep your food on a curfew and keep your body safe.

For more information on food safety call Food and Drug Administration at 1-888-SAFEFOOD or online at: www.cfsan.fda.gov, www.foodsafety.gov, and www.fsis.usda.gov

National Cancer Survivor's Day

Thanks to all of you who attended our third annual Survivor's Day event on June 14th. Over 100 local cancer survivors and care givers attended the event. Those in attendance were treated to a hilarious and inspirational presentation by Dave Caperton who combined grace and humor in his message of life and living.

Those attending enjoyed hors d'oeuvres while having the opportunity to meet and greet other survivors and caregivers.

National Cancer Survivor's Day, which is celebrated each year in many communities around the world on the first Sunday in June, is a symbolic event to demonstrate that life after a cancer diagnosis is a reality.



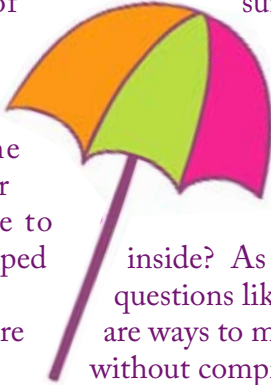
Ask the Chemotherapy Nurse

How can I Enjoy Summertime If I'm Taking Chemo

Kristy Alligood, RN, OCN



Okay, so you have a new cancer diagnosis and are just beginning chemotherapy, or maybe you've been on treatment but still have a way to go. Now, it's the beginning of summer. That means swimming rides, beach people are be out in the my summer mean I have to summer trapped I am asked answer? There side effects ability to enjoy Chemotherapy can make you more photosensitive to the sun, which means it can make the sun's UV rays work a lot stronger than they normally would. Other "pre-medications" given before your chemotherapy can also cause increased sensitivity to sunlight. But wait. That just suntan, right? No. the chances that sunburn even with direct or indirect sunlight. Chemotherapy weakens your immune system and increases your risk of developing an opportunistic infection if you experience sunburn. Dehydration can also result from sunburn.



But wait, telling me I can't sun. What about plans? Does that spend the whole inside? As an Oncology Nurse, questions like these a lot. The are ways to manage chemotherapy without compromising a patients' outdoor summertime activities.



means I'll get a better Instead, it increases you will experience a minimal amount of

Skin Protection Tips:

- Stay out of the sun from 10:00am – 3:00pm when the sun's rays are the strongest. Carry an umbrella or tent if necessary.



- Use a sunscreen with a 30 SPF or higher. Throw out sunscreen that is over a year old. It can lose its effectiveness.
- Don't forget to lather up on areas like nose, lips, ears, and feet.

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or scarf. Remember, chemo can cause hair loss but also hair thinning.

Some patients aren't aware how much thinning they have until they already have too much sun on their scalp.

- Dress for protection. Wear light-colored, long-sleeve, loose-fitting clothing.
- Drink plenty of water or electrolyte replacements (Gatorade, PowerAde) to keep your skin and the rest of your body well hydrated. You may need to increase your fluid intake during particularly humid days.
- Avoid alcohol. Not only can it cause dehydration, it is also a blood thinner and can be especially dangerous for someone undergoing chemotherapy.
- Eat well-balanced meals. Eating right will ensure you have the energy necessary to stay active and provide your body with the vitamins and minerals it needs.



The effects of chemotherapy drugs can last for 1-2 months after chemo has been completed. By that time, most of the drug has been used by the body and is out of the system, so it should be safe to go in the sun (with sunscreen and protection, of course). However, if the patient is going to have radiation after the chemotherapy, then careful protection will still be necessary. All areas of the body are more sensitive to sunburn, not just the radiated area. This includes not only sun exposure, but also heated jacuzzi's, saunas, heating pads, etc.



So yes, you can enjoy friends and family in outdoor fun this summer if; you plan ahead, be diligent about sunscreen and skin protection, and use good judgment with an optimistic spirit.



Shepard's Paws Continued from page 1

According to Sidbury, Kasey got the opportunity to do everything that Toby did not. He started obedience school at Top Dog Academy in 2005. Kasey and Lalla completed a variety of obedience training classes at the Academy and Kasey finished his last class in the fall of 2008.

During one of the last classes at Top Dog, Lalla overheard an instructor mention working with another dog that was being trained for therapeutic purposes. This peaked Sidbury's interest because her two dogs, Toby and Kasey, had truly been the therapy that helped her get through the challenging and trying times during her cancer treatment.

Kasey finished his classes in the fall of 2008 around the time of the Cancer Center's Shaggin' for a Cause fundraiser. During the event, Dr. Crews and Lalla got into a "bidding war" over a portrait of a chocolate lab painted by Mark Yates, who is the husband of Lori Yates, one of our oncology nurses.

During the course of the evening Lalla had the opportunity to share with Dr. Crews her story about Kasey and how he and Toby had truly been the best therapy for her during her own battle with cancer. Lalla tells us that Dr. Crews' eyes lit up with excitement at hearing Lalla and Kasey's story. Dr. Crews shared with Lalla about how our new oncology social worker, Kristi Fearington wanted to add pet therapy to our array of complementary therapy services.

As you can imagine, after Lalla and Kristi met, the program was well on its way to implementation. They selected the Delta Society's Pet Partners® program as the registration organization to evaluate and register her and Kasey so they could begin the program here at the Cancer Center. The Delta Society is a human-services organization dedicated to improving people's health and well-being through positive interactions with animals.

As part of the registration process, Lalla had to complete a home study and pass a "handler's" test and Kasey had to go through a skills simulation that evaluated him on a variety of scenarios that he may encounter while visiting patients. Lalla and Kasey passed the test with flying colors and the process of starting animal-assisted

therapy was well on its way!

"Kasey and I began visiting with patients in the chemotherapy bay at the Cancer Center the first week of June," said Sidbury. "Our visits have been incredible! It is so rewarding to see the patients faces light up as they visit with Kasey. It is obvious that his presence is having a positive impact on them during their treatment. Patients are asking us to come back on specific days so they can visit with Kasey during their next scheduled treatment."



"The Cancer Center and hospital staff have been awesome to work with as we developed policies and protocols for the program," said Sidbury. "I am so appreciative of how the Cancer Center staff has embraced the program and welcomed Kasey and me as part of the Cancer Center family."

Lalla, Kristi and Dr. Crews would love to see Shepard's Paws grow to include more dogs and handlers so that more patients could benefit from the healing effects of pet interaction.

By the way, in case you were wondering, Dr. Crews outbid Lalla for the print of the lab, but Lalla will tell you she is the real winner, because she and Kasey now have the awesome opportunity to serve her fellow cancer patients and survivors in a program that is truly a labor of love.

Doctors Corner

Melanoma in the Summertime

Jennie Crews, MD

Summertime's calling and we are all ready to enjoy the blessings that Eastern North Carolina has to offer: boating on the river and sound, fishing, golfing, relaxing on the beach. As you go out to indulge in these activities, remember to protect yourself from the unintended consequences of outdoor fun: sun damage.



I am not talking about wrinkles and age spots. While these are consequences of sun exposure, they are mostly damaging to our vanity. I am referring to sun damage that leads to skin cancer. The sun's ultraviolet radiation increases the risk of several skin cancers including melanoma, the most serious of the skin cancers. Melanoma is a cancer of the skin's pigment cells, called melanocytes. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation makes the melanocytes produce more pigment (aka a tan or freckles) in an attempt to shield the body from damage from this radiation. These same melanocytes can grow in an uncontrolled fashion and form cancerous melanomas.

Melanomas can appear in a previously normal area of skin or can arise from an existing mole. A form of melanoma can run in families where members have many atypical moles. Even dark-skinned individuals can get melanoma, usually on the soles of the feet or palms of the hands, which are areas that lack natural pigment.

Examining your skin can help detect early melanoma, which can be treated and even cured. To know what to look for, remember the ABCD's:

A = Asymmetry. One part of the mole does not look like the other.

B = Border. The borders are irregular or jagged.

C = Color. The color is changing or there are multiple shades within a mole. Also look for bleeding or the development of a nodule within the mole.

D = Diameter. A normal mole is usually < ¼ inch, or the diameter of a pencil eraser.

If you are concerned about a mole, show it to your health provider.

The incidence of melanoma has been on the rise over the past several decades; however, you can take steps to reduce your risk of getting melanoma by avoiding too much sun exposure. Wear a hat, sunglasses, and protective clothing. Avoid the hours of the most intense sun, 10am to 3pm. Use sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and reapply after swimming or physical exertion that causes sweating. Also avoid tanning beds. Contrary to popular belief, they are NOT safe alternatives to the sun.

So this summer, get out and enjoy all the beauty and fun the outdoors has to offer. But, enjoy it safely and responsibly!

Donated Hand-Made Journals



Members of the Connie Howard Circle of the First United Methodist Church in Washington recently donated hand-made journals for patients at the Marion L. Shepard Cancer Center. The ladies were inspired to create the project by fellow members and friends who have cancer. The members wrote "messages of hope" in each journal for inspiration and comfort. Members of the circle also donate hand-made hats for patients and plan to continue both projects. Pictured are: DJ Midgett, Circle Member, Dr. Jennie Crews, Medical Director of the Cancer Center, and Connie Howard, Circle Leader.

Mobile Art Cart by Alligood Cabinets



Cancer Center volunteer, Lee Vann and Shepard Cancer Foundation board member Jeff Tubaugh are pictured with Don Alligood of Alligood Cabinets who handcrafted the Center's art cart. The mobile art cart gives patients and caregivers the opportunity to engage in art-related activities during wait times. Materials are provided free of charge and art projects can be on-going for those who make frequent visits to the Cancer Center. The art cart is offered to people in the main waiting room as well as in the radiation waiting room. The art cart materials were purchased through funding provided by Washington Noon Rotary.

Restorative Yoga and Meditation

A yoga class that emphasizes relaxation for the body, mind and spirit. Registration is NOT required. Held every Monday at 6:00 p.m. at Lifestyles Medical Fitness Center.

Saturday yoga classes begin 8am July 11th

Classes are open to all cancer patients, survivors, and primary care givers.

Look Good...Feel Better

Monday, July 13th 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. A hands-on group session for adult female cancer patients currently in treatment who are coping with the side effects of chemotherapy and/or radiation treatment. Pre-registration is required.

Therapeutic Massage

Free therapeutic foot, hand and chair massages are available by appointment. *Appointments are open to all cancer patients, survivors, and primary caregivers.*

Shepard's Paws

A Delta Society Pet Partners® registered program, is a new complementary therapy program that began at the Cancer Center in early June. A local dog, Kasey visits patients at the Cancer Center a few times a week. *Pet interaction has been proven to help improve people's health and well-being.*

All Cancer Center Programs are FREE.

For more information, to make an appointment or to register, please call Kristi Fearington at the Cancer Center at 975-4308, ext. 109

www.marionlshepardcancercenter.org

Clinical Trials

Sharon Bell, RN



The Cancer Center's clinical trials department recently received a monetary grant from the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). We were one of only three institutions given the grant and will use it to expand our clinical trials program to include radiation oncology trials. The ability to offer clinical trials using radiation therapy will benefit many of our patients, including those with breast, lung, head and neck, and prostate cancer. The grant we received will assist in the costs of credentialing and certification to conduct radiation clinical trials. Once the credentialing process is complete, we will make these trials available to our patients. We are very proud to be able to serve our patient population with state of the art clinical trial selections conveniently located in their community. We strive to be on the forefront for you. Please ask your doctor or nurse about clinical trials and spread the word.



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Cancer Center News

“We live for today, everyday”

-Cancer Survivor



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