

TheLinkforHope

A NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOSHEN CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK
SPRING 2017

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NEW SURVIVOR WEBSITE!

GoshenSurvivors.com

The Goshen Cancer Survivor Network website has been upgraded! It is your source for information on upcoming events such as our new Elev.Eight Health and Wellness Seminars and the Living with Cancer Support Group, as well as lots of Noontime Nosh recipes, survivor resources, and stories of hope.

Stay up to date on the latest Survivor Network happenings by visiting <http://goshensurvivors.com> or contact the Survivor Network office at 574-364-2922.

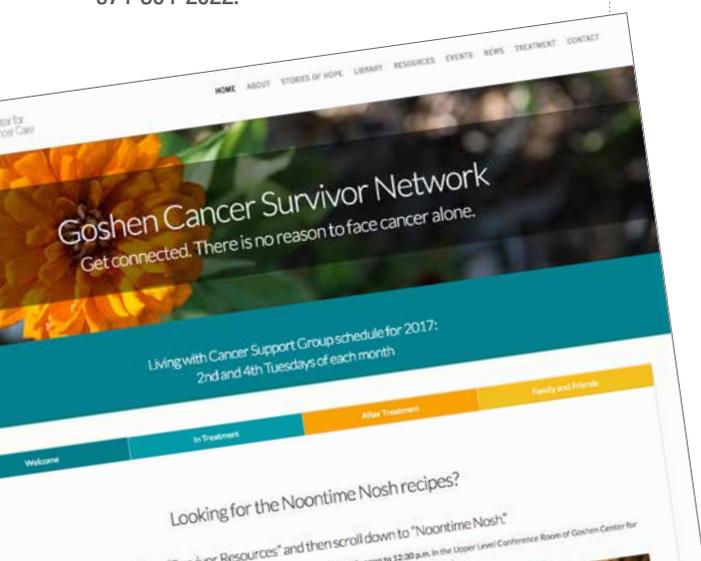
ELEV.EIGHT YOUR HEALTH IN THE NEW YEAR!

Goshen Center for Cancer Care is launching a brand new program to lift the body, mind and spirit. ELEV.EIGHT is a series of eight health and wellness seminars to promote living a healthy lifestyle. Seminar attendees learn a variety of ways to strengthen the physical body, cope with the side effects of cancer treatments, reduce stress, harness an inner well-being and build the body's natural defenses. The program is open to patients and caregivers and is designed to elevate awareness of health needs to improve quality of life and help those impacted by cancer rise above the disease and their unique circumstances.

ELEV.EIGHT TOPIC CALENDAR

February 21	Plant-Based Diet
March 21	Living Green
April 18	Exercise Readiness
June 20	Mindfulness
July 18	Gardening
August 15	Bone & Heart Health
September 19	Beauty from the Inside Out
October 17	I'm a Survivor. Now What?

Classes are FREE and begin at 4:30 p.m. at the Goshen Center for Cancer Care. Registration is encouraged. Register by calling (574) 364-2948.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GENETIC TESTING.



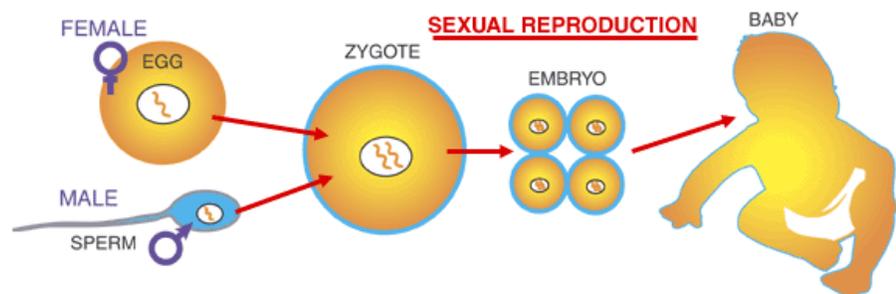
Betsy Garber, MSN, FNP, NP-C, Nurse Practitioner

Patients who have completed their cancer treatments start to look to the future. How do I prevent my cancer from coming back? How do I prevent new cancers from forming? The other question that they ask is “Is my family’s risk affected by my cancer?”. That is an interesting question, and one that is not easily answered. The easy answer is YES. The more challenging question is “WHY?”.

GENETIC BASICS:

As human beings, we have 23 pairs of chromosomes. Each chromosome consists of thousands of genes (20,000-25,000). Each gene carries the instructions for the creation of proteins/amino acids, which are thought to be the building blocks of who we are.

One pair of these chromosomes we inherited from our father, one pair we inherited from our mother. The old “when the sperm met the egg” story.



The problem comes when either the mother or the father carry an alteration in one of their genes, called a “mutation”, that can be passed on to their children. Research has shown that an alteration or mutation in certain genes can carry an increased risk of cancer in the person who carries the mutation.

The only way to know if you have a mutation is to have genetic testing.

WHAT IS GENETIC TESTING?

Genetic testing is when a sample of your blood (or saliva) is taken to look for inherited mutations. Genetic mutations can be an indicator of CANCER RISK.

WHY DOES GENETIC TESTING MATTER?

In someone who has already been diagnosed and treated for a certain cancer, genetic testing results may not change their treatment plan. BUT if a mutation is identified, it may increase the risk of cancer in that person’s family members (those NOT diagnosed with cancer), who should then be

tested for the same mutation.

We want to make sure to do all we can to prevent cancer from occurring, or diagnosing it as early as possible. We want to match the screening with the risk. For example, for a young woman who has a mother and sister diagnosed with breast cancer at 45y and 47y respectively, the plan would be to begin screening mammograms approximately 10 years earlier than the youngest breast cancer diagnosis (which would be 35y), and consider adding MRI imaging of the breasts as well (if certain other criteria are met). For a woman without this history, the general screening guidelines recommend starting mammograms at age 40.

For women who carry a genetic mutation that could increase their risk of developing breast/ovarian cancer (for example), the recommendations are specific depending on exactly which gene carries the mutation. Additional recommendations may include increased imaging as well as consideration of surgical procedures to prevent cancer or detect it an early stage. Is there any recommendation that works for every patient? No, each patient is different.

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER GENETIC TESTING FOR CANCER RISK?

Someone with a personal or family history of:

- Cancer that was diagnosed at an unusually young age
- Several different types of cancer in the same person
- Specific cancer that occurs more than once in the same person.
- Several close family members that have the same kind of cancer or related cancers.
 - Example: a sister, mother and maternal aunt with breast cancer
 - Example: family members with breast, pancreatic and high grade prostate cancer
- Rare forms of cancer
 - Male breast cancer
 - Triple negative breast cancer (not estrogen or progesterone sensitive) before 60y
 - Ovarian cancer
 - Colorectal cancer younger than 50y
 - Breast cancer younger than 45y
- Being a member of a racial/ethnic group that is known to have an increased risk of a hereditary syndrome.

FROM YOUR NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR:
Rebecca Lovejoy, ND, LAc

Much of what we try to accomplish in naturopathic oncology supportive care is based on the concept of "epigenetics," which is the modification of gene expression even though a gene sequence remains the same. We aim to help keep "good," cancer-suppressing, genes turned on and "bad," cancer-promoting, genes turned off. Exciting research is continuously emerging on the potential for healthful lifestyle habits and certain natural agents to have favorable epigenetic influences. Increasing physical activity after a cancer diagnosis is a prime example of this concept.



WHAT CANCERS HAVE KNOWN GENETIC RISK ASSOCIATED WITH THEM?

This is an always changing answer. Right now, genetic testing can help determine risk for numerous cancer types, including: Breast, ovarian, colorectal, uterine, pancreatic, prostate, gastric, and melanoma, as well as others. Genetic testing is only as good as the test being used today.

In 2013, when Angelina Jolie was tested, genetic testing consisted only of BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 genes. Genetic

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/genetics/genetic-testing-fact-sheet#q4>
- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/genetics/understanding-genetic-testing-for-cancer.html>
- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/genetics/should-i-get-genetic-testing-for-cancer-risk.html>

testing today can include a different number of genes, depending on the family history, up to at least 28 different genes known to carry an increased risk of cancer.

WHAT IS THE ONE THING I CAN DO TO HELP IDENTIFY MY RISK?

Know your family history, on both your mother and father's side.

The more details you have, the better: alive or deceased, age at death and cause, sex of children, and cancer history. This would be for parents, grandparents, siblings, children, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews. The more you know about your family history, the more you will know about your cancer risk.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

The first person to discuss this with is your oncologist or your primary care provider; they will know available resources for genetic testing and screening.

There is much more information on genetic cancer risk assessment, including discussion of privacy, discrimination protection, cost of testing at the web sites noted below.

FROM YOUR MIND-BODY COUNSELOR:
Karen Alkema, LMHC



Living with the threat of cancer in the family can be challenging. Here are three ways to cope:

REMEMBER YOUR INDIVIDUALITY. Don't dwell on statistics. Family cancer risk is only one part of an individual's cancer risk. Remember that cancer risk is different for each person.

EDUCATE YOURSELF. You're in charge of your health. Learn as much as you can to feel comfortable about your cancer risk. The more you know, the more confident you may feel about your healthcare and lifestyle choices.

JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER. Many people feel empowered when they join in the fight against cancer. You may decide to volunteer your time with a cancer support organization, participate in local cancer walks or become a cancer advocate by supporting a case, idea or policy.



FROM YOUR REGISTERED DIETITIAN:
Becky Overholt
RDN, CSO, CD

"It doesn't matter what I eat because cancer is in my family." Not true! Only about 5 to 10 percent of all cancers are thought to be caused by an inherited "cancer gene." Even if you have a strong family history of a particular cancer or carry a specific cancer gene, eating habits and lifestyle choices can influence whether cancer actually develops. Genes can be activated and deactivated (like switching on or off their ability to send signals), and the way we live influences that. Focus on what you do have control over--healthy food and drink choices, physical activity and a healthy weight.



Spring Events

in partnership with GOSHEN CENTER FOR CANCER CARE

2017 MONTHLY EVENTS

Living With Cancer Support Group
Coping & support for patients, families and friends!
2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 4:30 – 6 pm

Noontime Nosh
Healthy cooking demonstrations and tastings!
1st Thursday, 12 – 12:30 pm

MARCH 21
Elev.Eight: Living Green
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm
Goshen Center for Cancer Care
Hear from Naturopathic Doctors on how to reduce chemicals in your daily living, from cleaning to personal care.

APRIL 18
Elev.Eight: Exercise Readiness
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm
Goshen Center for Cancer Care
Tools and motivation from an exercise physiologist on how to start a program tailored to your fitness level.

APRIL 8
6th Annual Shred It Event
9 am – 12 noon
200 High Park Avenue, Goshen
Secure Document Shredding by Integra Certified Document Destruction, \$10 donation to benefit HeartStrings Sisters

SAVE THE DATE
JUNE 18
Michiana Cancer Survivors Day
Private picnic and baseball game at Four Winds Field, South Bend

The Link for Hope is a publication of the Goshen Cancer Survivor Network.

Contact info:



Libby Stout
Cancer Survivor Network Coordinator

(574) 364-2922
email: estout@goshenhealth.com
www.goshensurvivors.org

Event information is available by visiting
<http://goshensurvivors.org> or calling Libby Stout (574) 364-2922