

the source



breast cancer resource center

providing breast cancer education,
information and emotional support

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

bcrc happenings

BCRC is a non-profit program of the YWCA Princeton dedicated to increasing breast cancer awareness in the community and to providing information and support to women and families affected by breast cancer. Programs and services include breast health workshops, health fairs, a breast cancer helpline, a resource library, support groups, a wig & prosthesis bank, a wellness program and a woman-to-woman network. Watch this section to keep "abreast" of BCRC happenings!

Advanced Breast Cancer Support Group Established

March 7th saw a group of courageous and inspiring women gather together for the first meeting of BCRC's new Advanced Breast Cancer Support Group. Facilitator Elsje Reiss, MSW, LCSW, explains why this group is such a wonderful addition to BCRC's Support Program. "Living with metastatic breast cancer, often for many years, poses a unique challenge. This group provides a safe place, where women with this disease know that they will be understood when they share their deepest feelings and concerns." Marylou, a regular member of the group adds, "I thoroughly enjoy the support group. I was hoping to come across one for Stage IV survivors for awhile. I find it to be wonderfully upbeat and inspiring."

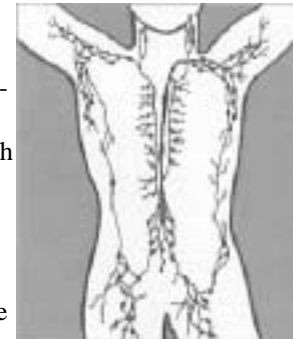
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lymphedema prevention and management

If you are a breast cancer patient or survivor, chances are you've heard of lymphedema. But, do you actually know what it is, what causes it, what to do to prevent it, and how to manage it? BCRC asked certified lymphedema therapist Melissa Walker, MPT, CLT, from Hamilton Physical Therapy Services to shed some light on this condition and offer some practical advice for prevention and management.

What is the lymphatic system?

The lymphatic system consists of a network of specialized lymphatic vessels, bean-shaped structures called lymph nodes, and various tissues and organs throughout the body that are part of the immune system. The lymphatic system collects excess fluid and proteins from the body tissues, passes them through the lymph nodes (which act like a strainer, removing foreign material and bacteria) and carries them back to the bloodstream. Unlike the circulatory system, which has a pump (the heart) to push fluid from one segment to the next, the lymphatic system pulls fluid through the body like a siphon using a system of valved vessels.



What is lymphedema?

Breast cancer related lymphedema is a swelling of the arm and/or chest wall that can result from an impaired lymphatic system e.g. removal of lymph nodes or scarring of nodes from surgery or radiation. When a person with a healthy lymphatic system gets a cut or puts excess strain on a certain area, the system increases its ability to process this extra load back into the bloodstream. However, when the lymph system is impaired, this excess fluid (along with any bacteria it is carrying) can collect, causing swelling and increased susceptibility to infection.

Who is at risk?

Approximately 15-20% of women who have had lymph nodes removed for breast cancer develop lymphedema. It can develop immediately after surgery, or weeks, months, and even years later.

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The Advanced Breast Cancer Support Group meets on the first and third Monday of each month 7:30 - 9:00pm, in the YWCA Library. If you have metastatic breast cancer and think this group might help you cope, please contact BCRC for more information.

Wig & Prosthesis Bank Now Accepting Gently Used Wigs, Hats and Scarves



Do you have a wig, hat or scarf that you no longer need? Why not donate it to the BCRC Wig & Prosthesis Bank? Your contribution will help another woman coping with breast cancer to feel better about herself during treatment. Donations can be sent by mail, or dropped off at the BCRC office Monday-Friday, 12:00 - 5:00 pm. Please wash all items before they are donated.

Guest Speaker Series Summer Schedule

The need for information does not stop when summer vacation starts! BCRC will continue to conduct its Guest Speaker Series throughout the summer months and we hope you will join us. Sessions are free and open to anyone interested in breast cancer. Healthy refreshments are provided.

Intimacy After Breast Cancer

Naomi Vilko M.D, VG Center for Sexual Health
Tuesday June 14, 2005. 7:30 - 9:00 pm, Bramwell House Living Room
(spouses/partners are encouraged to attend)

East Meets West - Acupuncture for Relief of Breast Cancer Treatment Symptoms

Karen Flicker MSCA, OTR, Acupuncturist & Occupational Therapist, University Medical Center at Princeton Tuesday July 12, 2005.
7:30 - 9:00 pm, Bramwell House Living Room

Simplify Your Finances, Simplify Your Life!

Lita Marks CFA, Financial Advisor, & Mary O'Neill, CFP, Financial Advisor, Merrill Lynch
Tuesday August 9, 2005. 7:30 - 9:00 pm, Bramwell House Living Room

from the director's desk

Change can be difficult - just ask someone who's lived in five countries in eight years! But I prefer to think of change as an opportunity and a challenge. Change lets us stretch and grow, and reach new heights. Price Pritchett said, "Change always comes bearing gifts" and I have been the recipient of those gifts too often to argue with him!



BCRC has undergone many changes in the last five months - the departure of well-known and loved staff members, the arrival of a new director, a move into new office space, and development of several new programs. And yes, these changes have been difficult at times, but they have also given BCRC a very precious gift. We have been given the opportunity to re-focus and once again put all our energies into doing what we do best, provide high quality, personalized information and support to women and families affected by breast cancer, and increase awareness of breast cancer in the community.

I am excited about the challenges that lay ahead, and am confident that together we can reach new heights. I hope that this first new issue of *The Source* will inspire you to embrace the changes that have occurred, and enjoy the gifts that will come your way as a result.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Kara Stephenson".

Kara Stephenson, BCRC Director

so many ways to give...

As a program of the non-profit YWCA, BCRC relies a great deal on the generosity of individuals, groups and businesses in the community to support our programs and services.

But just as every woman or man with breast cancer is different, every BCRC supporter is different, and contributions come in all shapes and sizes! In this section, we'd like to highlight just a few of the many contributions we've received recently, and say thank you to those whose kindness has touched our hearts.

- Anne Guinn of "Rose & Anne's TLC" in Mercerville donated more than \$7000 worth of new mastectomy bras and slips, Softees and prostheses to the BCRC Wig & Prosthesis Bank. These items will be provided free of charge to women in need.

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volunteer spotlight



Volunteers are the heart and soul of BCRC. They bring energy, enthusiasm, knowledge, experience, passion and compassion to the organization. They are survivors and supporters, women and men, young and old, from all walks of life and we could not do what we do without them. In this section we recognize, thank and celebrate our volunteers!

Deborah Smetanka was diagnosed with breast cancer in August 2003 at the age of 47. Her DCIS (ductal carcinoma in situ) was detected during her annual mammogram. She chose to have a mastectomy and now takes the aromatase inhibitor Arimidex. Kara sat down with Deborah to discuss her experience with breast cancer and find out what inspired her to volunteer with BCRC.

K: How has having breast cancer affected you and your family?

D: Being diagnosed with cancer puts things in perspective quickly. You see clearly what is important. My husband and I try very hard to live in the present, we don't dwell on the past. We appreciate every day and look forward to the future.

K: When did you start volunteering for BCRC? What prompted you to reach out?

D: I started volunteering with BCRC in October of 2003. I felt that I needed to turn this negative event in my life into something positive.

K: What type of volunteering have you done for BCRC?

D: I help out in the office with mailings and have participated at health fairs talking to women about early detection, providing literature, and explaining the kind of support that BCRC offers.

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breast health quiz winners

How much do you know about breast cancer? These women put their knowledge to the test by taking BCRC's Breast Health Quiz at a health fair, and won! Congratulations to the winners and thank you to the generous local businesses that donated the prizes.

Winners:

Teruko Yoshida, Somerset NJ; Annette Sheldon, West Windsor NJ; Ketty Charles, Trenton NJ; Martha Blom, Highland Park NJ; Carol Curtis, Lawrenceville NJ.

Prize Sponsors:

Styleworthy at Salon 17, Pennington NJ; Princeton Center for Yoga & Health, Skillman NJ; Jeweler's Workbench, Mercerville NJ; Serendipity, Pennington NJ.



You don't have to give up grilling to stay healthy this summer! Give these Grilled Portabello "Burgers" a try.

Portobello mushrooms can be a satisfying substitute for beef, as long as you have another protein source in the meal. Reduced-fat cheese works well in this recipe.

2 large Portobello mushrooms, wiped clean, stems removed
3 Tbsp. low-fat Italian bottled dressing

Canola oil spray
2 slices reduced-fat Swiss cheese (about 2 oz.)
½ jar (7oz.) roasted red peppers, drained
1 whole wheat pita, cut in half
Dijon mustard, if desired
Low-fat mayonnaise, if desired

Marinate mushrooms in dressing for 30 minutes to 2 hours. Prepare grill by spraying lightly with oil. On medium-high heat, grill mushrooms for 7-10 minutes, turning once midway through cooking. Cover with either lid or foil for quick cooking. Place one slice of cheese on top of each mushroom and allow to melt. Remove from grill and stuff peppers and mushrooms into pita halves. Add mustard and lowfat mayonnaise if desired. Makes 2 servings.

Per serving: 214 calories, 5g total fat (1g saturated fat), 30g carbohydrates, 13g protein, 4g dietary fiber, 692mg sodium. Preparation time: 20 minutes.

Reproduced with permission from "Cooking Solo Homemade for Health, Cooking for Lower Cancer Risk. American Institute for Cancer Research, 2004.

in the news



Herceptin® Combined With Chemotherapy Improves Disease-Free Survival for Patients with Early-Stage Breast Cancer

Results from two large randomized clinical trials for patients with HER-2 positive invasive breast cancer show that those patients with early-stage breast cancer who received Herceptin® (trastuzumab) in combination with chemotherapy had a significant decrease in risk for breast cancer recurrence compared with patients who received the same chemotherapy without trastuzumab. Patients are considered "HER-2 positive" if their cancer cells "overexpress," or make too much of, a protein called HER-2, which is found on the surface of cancer cells. Trastuzumab slows or stops the growth of these cells, and it is only used to treat cancers that overexpress the HER-2 protein.

Approximately 20 percent to 30 percent of breast cancers overexpress HER-2. These tumors tend to grow faster and are generally more likely to recur than tumors that do not overproduce HER-2.

Information from over 3,300 patients enrolled in these studies was used for analysis. Patients with operable

breast cancer whose tumors over-expressed HER-2 were enrolled in these studies between February 2000 and April 2005. Patients were randomized to receive chemotherapy with doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide followed by paclitaxel, or doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide followed by paclitaxel and trastuzumab. Most patients had lymph node-positive breast cancer, or breast cancer that had spread to the lymph nodes, with only a minority having lymph node-negative disease.

Trastuzumab is an example of a "targeted" therapy -- an agent that is directed against a specific change in the cancer cell. Trastuzumab was approved for the treatment of advanced breast cancer in 1998.

Edward Romond, M.D., study chair for the NSABP and professor of oncology at the University of Kentucky, in Lexington, Ky., noted, "For women with this type of aggressive breast cancer, the addition of trastuzumab to chemotherapy appears to virtually reverse prognosis from unfavorable to good."

Provided by the National Cancer Institute's Atlantic Region Cancer Information Service. For more information, see the National Cancer Institute press release at:

<http://cancer.gov/newscenter/pressreleases/HerceptinCombination2005>

a good read



100 Questions and Answers About Breast Cancer

Written by Zora Brown and

LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., MD with Elizabeth Platt

Reviewed by Lia Daniels, BCRC Administrative Assistant

How do genes affect breast cancer risk? What can I do about fatigue during chemotherapy? What are the options for breast reconstruction? If you have ever wondered about the answers to these questions, then *100 Questions and Answers About Breast Cancer* is for you. The authors, Zora Brown and LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., MD, begin by describing what cancer is and then delve into topics ranging from breast cancer risk factors to treatment options to psychological effects on survivors, and even coping with divorce. There is an appendix with a listing of books and referral resources that deal with breast cancer as well as a glossary of medical terms commonly used by doctors. The writing style is very clear and easy to understand, especially for those of us who are not so medically inclined! *100 Questions and Answers About Breast Cancer* is very comprehensive and I highly recommend it for anyone who is interested in learning more about breast cancer.

If you've read a good breast cancer related book and would like to make sure others know about it, send your review to bcrc@ywcaprinceton.org. **Visit the BCRC Resource Library to check out these new titles**

Letters for Lizzie by James O'Donnell

No More Bad Hair Days by Susan Sturges Hyde

Breast Cancer: What You Should Know About Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment by Steve Austin, N.D., and Cathy Hitchcock, M.S.W.



body mind and soul

Feeling stressed out? Try the *Step Inside a Painting* meditation exercise to calm your mind and soothe your soul.



Find a painting or picture that you enjoy, and place it a few feet away from you. Sit in a place where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes. Focus on your breathing. Mentally watch your body breathing in and breathing out. Don't try to change anything. After a minute or so, you'll notice that your body will start to slow down. Open your eyes and regard the picture. Simply watch the picture. Note the scenery, the lines, the colors. Get the picture in your mind. When you feel comfortable with that, close your eyes, and mentally "see" the picture and imagine you can walk into the picture, through the frame. You are now standing inside the picture. Take a look back and look through the frame to where you are sitting. Then, turn around and allow your mind to take you into the picture. Explore.

research

Help Discover the Causes of Breast

Cancer... Woman by

Woman, Sister by Sister! The Sister Study, a national research study designed to identify environmental and genetic causes of breast cancer, is enrolling women aged 35-74 whose sister had breast cancer. Because it is important for women from different ethnic groups and backgrounds to participate in the Sister Study so the results of the study will benefit everyone, the women needed most at this time are African American women, Latinas, Native Americans, Asians and all women over 65. To learn more about enrolling or helping us spread the word in harder to reach communities, please call 1-877-4SISTER (1-877-474-7837) or visit www.sisterstudy.org.



click on it

About Herbs, Botanicals and Other Products

<http://www.mskcc.org/aboutherbs>

The About Herbs, Botanicals and Other Products section of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) Integrative Medicine Service website provides a wealth of reliable, evidence-based information on herbs, botanicals, vitamins and other supplements ranging from AE-941 (shark cartilage) to licorice to zinc. Each entry in this searchable database has a wealth of information on uses, warnings, and adverse reactions to herbs as well as references to research that supports the data provided. There is an easy-to-understand "consumer" version and a more in-depth "healthcare professional" version for each entry. Additional features include a FAQs section, and a News & Alerts section. The MSKCC Integrative Medicine Service staff, led by an oncology-trained pharmacist and botanicals expert, maintain and continually updated the site as new information becomes available.

Complementary therapies are not substitutes for mainstream medical care; they are used in concert with medical treatment to help alleviate stress, reduce pain and anxiety, manage symptoms, and promote a feeling of well-being. You should also always check with your doctor before starting any holistic treatment program.



q&a

Q. I understand that aromatase occurs naturally in the body. What is it and what role does it play? - Mimi

A. Aromatase is an enzyme which converts androgenic steroids into estrogen in post-menopausal women whose ovaries are no longer producing estrogen. In the setting of hormonally-responsive breast cancer, stopping aromatase from doing its work results in a decline of estrogen production, which is likely how aromatase inhibitors (AI's) work against breast cancers. - Dr. Richard T. Lee, M.D., Hematology/Medical Oncology, Princeton Medical Group.

If you would like a doctor to answer your question in an upcoming issue, email it along with your first name, to bcrc@ywcaprinceton.org

remembering dr. jeanne petrek

BCRC mourns the loss of dedicated breast cancer surgeon and researcher Dr. Jeanne Petrek. Marlene Brown, a BCRC friend remembers her...

"Dr. Petrek performed my surgery in 2000 and I firmly believed that she saved my life. Not only was she a brilliant surgeon, but she was an incredibly nice person. It is almost too overwhelming to put into words how sorely Dr. Petrek will be missed. So, I can only say, without Dr. Petrek, the sun shines a bit less brightly, but I know that she is the brightest star in the night sky."

Ways to Give continued from page 2

- The Silhouettes of Hope 2005 Calendar project, initiated by a group of Princeton area women affected by breast cancer, has raised more than \$21,500 (and a lot of awareness) for BCRC. These courageous women are an inspiration to us all!
- Sara Kline and her friend Marni Zahorsky, both 12, along with Sara's mom Gabrielle, volunteered their time and creative talents to put up the BCRC bulletin board for the months of April and May. They have agreed to take on this volunteer job each month to provide visitors to the main YWCA building with easy access to information about breast cancer and BCRC's programs and services.
- A generous two-year pledge received from The Starr Foundation will help to maintain and expand BCRC's information and support programs for women and families affected by breast cancer.



If you would like to volunteer, make a donation, organize a fundraiser, or contribute in some other way, please fill out and return the form on the last page, or contact BCRC at 609-497-2100 or brc@ywcaprinceton.org.

Volunteer spotlight continued from page 2



In March 2005 I took the plunge and joined Kara to give a Breast Health presentation to the staff of Isles Inc., a non-profit group in Trenton. I spoke about my breast cancer experience in an effort to remind women that breast cancer can happen to anyone, and to reinforce the message that early detection can save lives. I am excited to be participating

in two volunteer training workshops offered by BCRC in May, which will enable me to better support other women affected by this disease.

K: What do you gain from your volunteer experience and what do you hope to contribute?

D: The day my doctor told me I had breast cancer, I looked around the room, thinking he couldn't be talking to me. I always thought I did everything right - I ate a healthy diet and exercised regularly. In a second, my happy little world changed. With the help of my wonderful husband, family, and friends, I got through that first year in a relatively calm manner. I have a wonderful support system and my life has returned to a new

"normal." Some women don't have that support. I volunteer for BCRC because I want to help that woman who doesn't have a strong support system. I volunteer because I feel very fortunate that my cancer was found at an early stage by mammogram and I want to help pass the message that mammograms do work. In the last two years I have met many wonderful, courageous women who are dealing with this disease every day and it has made me realize just how strong we women really are! Volunteering has turned my breast cancer diagnoses into something positive!

If you would like more information about the BCRC Volunteer Program please contact us or send in the form on the back page to request a Volunteer Application Form.

Happiness is not a station you arrive at, but a manner of traveling.

- Margaret B. Runbeck

bcrc wants to hear from you!

Please check all appropriate boxes:

- I would like to be a BCRC Volunteer! Please send me a volunteer application form.
- I would like to make a donation.*
- I've moved! Please change my address.
- Please add me to the mailing list.
- Please remove me from the mailing list.



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone () _____ Email _____

Please return to: Breast Cancer Resource Center, YWCA Princeton, 59 Paul Robeson Place, Princeton, NJ 08540 or email bcrc@ywcaprinceton.org.

*To make a donation, kindly write a check payable to YWCA Princeton Breast Cancer Resource Center. If you would like to make a contribution in memory/celebration of someone else, please include the person's name as well as an address to where we may send the donation acknowledgement card.

lymphedema prevention and management continued from page 1

Can lymphedema be prevented?

According to The National Lymphedema Network (NLN), there is no cure for lymphedema. However, there are many ways to reduce your risk of developing it:

- Have blood pressure, blood samples, vaccinations, IVs, etc. on the unaffected arm. Wear a lymphedema bracelet to alert medical staff (available from NLN at 1-800-541-3259).
- Use an electric shaver.
- Carry handbags and heavier objects in your unaffected arm.
- Avoid injuries to your affected arm (cuts, burns, insect bites, scratches etc.), and clean any cuts you do get with soap and water followed by antibacterial ointment. Wear gloves when doing housework, gardening etc.
- Take care of fingernails and do not cut cuticles.
- Use low pH lotions like Eucerine after bathing to keep the skin properly moisturized.
- Avoid extreme temperatures, e.g., saunas and hot tubs.
- Refrain from overworking and fatiguing the affected arm with repetitive movements.
- Wear loose jewelry and clothing.



- Purchase a properly fitted breast prosthesis and bra.
- Use thimbles for sewing.
- Never apply an ace wrap or elastic bandage or tight sleeve to the arm.

What are the symptoms?

Just like an early breast cancer diagnosis, an early lymphedema diagnosis and appropriate treatment can greatly improve the outcome. Make sure you know the signs and symptoms of lymphede-

ma and see your doctor if you notice any of them:

- You notice decreased flexibility and strength in the arm.
- You have the feeling that your skin is stretched tight.
- Your rings, bracelets, or wristwatch become tighter.
- You notice a persistent swelling in the chest, arm and/or hand.
- Your clothes don't fit well in a specific area (e.g., the upper sleeve of your shirt is too tight).
- Your arm feels full and/or heavy.

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**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca

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Managing Lymphedema

A diagnosis of lymphedema, whether it is immediately after surgery, during your treatment or long after you have recovered, can be an overwhelming and frustrating experience. It is important to remember that lymphedema can be successfully managed.

Complete decongestive therapy, performed by a certified lymphedema therapist, is the most beneficial way to manage your lymphedema. This therapy combines manual lymphatic drainage, compression wraps and garments, therapeutic exercises, and patient education to reduce the swelling and maintain that reduction over a period of time. Manual lymphatic drainage is a special massage technique that helps to move the stagnant fluids out of the affected area into other uncompromised regions of the lymphatic system that can help process it. Compression wrapping uses special bandages and compression foam to support the lymphatic system, and increase lymph flow. This compression bandaging is necessary for reduction and maintenance of the excess fluid in the affected area. Once the lymphedema has reduced to a more consistent level, the patient can be

measured for a personalized compression garment (like an elastic sleeve). While it is true that certain activities may increase the lymphedema, performing regular gentle exercises while wearing compression bandages is actually beneficial as it enables muscle and joint pumps to increase lymph flow. Patients are also instructed in proper skin care and lymphedema precautions.

The study of lymphedema has led to advancements in treatment that have directly impacted and improved patient care and quality of life. Patients who are diagnosed and treated for lymphedema can maintain their lifestyles with only a few precautions. Although the occurrence of lymphedema is real, there is only a small percentage of at risk patients who ever develop symptoms. Lymphedema should not be seen as a barrier or limitation to the exciting possibilities that life has to offer!

If you have any questions regarding lymphedema and its management, consult your physician, visit the National Lymphedema Network website www.lymphnet.org or contact Melissa S. Walker, MPT, CLT at Hamilton Physical Therapy Services, 609-585-2333.