Cancer Prevention and Screening

Melissa Kaime, MD, FACP
*Medical Oncology and Hematology*

In 2017 more than 1.6 million people will be diagnosed with a cancer in the United States. We can prevent many future cancers with some simple changes in our lifestyle. These changes also reduce the risk of many other diseases like cardiovascular disease and arthritis.

**Mayo Clinic has provided seven cancer prevention tips.**

1. **Don’t use tobacco, in any form.** Smoking causes 188,744 cancer deaths per year in the US.
2. **Eat a healthy diet.** Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, avoid obesity, moderate your alcohol intake and limit processed meats.
3. **Maintain a healthy weight** and be physically active.
4. **Protect yourself** from the sun.
5. **Get immunized** against hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV).
6. **Avoid risk behaviors.** Practice safe sex and don’t share needles.
7. **Get regular medical care,** including screening for skin, cervical, breast, and colon cancers.

Screening tests help find and treat several types of cancer early, leading to easier treatment and reducing the chance of dying from that cancer. Screening tests can have potential harms and benefits so it is helpful to discuss the role of screening with your physician.

There are several screening tests that have shown to reduce cancer deaths.

- Screening for colon or rectal cancer with a colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy or testing the stool for blood helps doctors detect and remove colon polyps before they develop into cancer.
- Screening for lung cancer in heavy smokers with a CT scan can find an early stage cancer that can be removed before it spreads, increasing the chance of survival.
- Screening for breast cancer reduces the chance of dying from breast cancer.
- Screening for cervical cancer with a Pap test and HPV testing finds abnormal cells early, leading to treatment before cancer develops.

Your physician may recommend other screening tests depending on your family history and your current health problems.

Take charge of your own cancer prevention and screening! Call your primary care physician or contact The Wellness Neighborhood of Tahoe Forest Health System at (530) 550-6730.

*Melissa Kaime, MD, FACP, comes to the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where she was a staff physician in the Department of Hematology/Oncology.*
Welcome to our 2018 Winter/Spring edition of Tahoe Cancer News. This issue contains an overview of useful programs available here at the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center. Keep it for your reference.

**Cancer Prevention and Screening**
Dr. Melissa Kaime, our Director of Quality Programs, has given you a clear, clean, and concise outline of why cancer screening is critically important to you and your family, along with a set of simple tasks for you to help keep yourself safe. You might save it as a reference.

**Walkabout Project**
We are developing a program for remote physical therapy using telecommunications for our patients who are unable to attend our group exercise classes at Tahoe Forest Hospital or Incline Village Community Hospital. This fledgling program might be just the answer for patients living in more remote areas. Michelle Larson, MPT, came up with the idea and describes it for you here.

**Massage Therapy**
Massage therapy is a much-appreciated service throughout the medical experience. For cancer patients it provides significant help. Polly Triplat, CMT, has written a very comprehensive explanation of the philosophy and application of this useful modality.

**Our Art Experience**
In our last issue, we discussed how we chose our art for the center. In this issue we describe in more detail a few representative pieces from James Shay, Pamela Hunt Lee, Brent Baker, and of course, my dad, Dr. Milton Heifetz. Please use it as a guide as you enjoy all of our collection.

**The Quality Oncology Practice Initiative**
In our last issue, James McKenna, MHA, our Director, explained the importance of national accrediting organizations to our capacity to honestly feel we are delivering quality care. Being certified by the Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI) is one of those important programs we want you to understand more about.

**The Importance of Sleep**
Nikki Dean, E-YRT, has written a fabulous article on the value of sleep to all of us, especially our patients. Many of us can relate to not sleeping well and she has given us guidelines to help us improve our sleeping.

**Biofeedback**
Biofeedback—you’ve heard of it, but what is it? Linda MacKenzie, a Certified Biofeedback Therapist at Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center, explains that biofeedback uses a patient’s own biology to provide information that can be used to learn self-regulation techniques for reducing stress, pain or other unpleasant conditions. By the way, it can also be used for sports enhancement.

**Smiles**
We wanted to end this issue with a heartfelt expression of what it is like to be an oncology nurse. Lisa Wry, RN, BSN, OCN has artfully articulated in a few short lines why she and her partners come to work every day with satisfaction and fulfillment.

I hope this newsletter continues to be helpful to you. Your feedback is greatly appreciated, so please feel free to reach out to us with any useful suggestions.

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**FROM our MEDICAL DIRECTOR**

Laurence J. Heifetz, MD, FACP

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**CONTACT US**

(530) 582-6450 | info@tfhd.com
10121 Pine Avenue, Truckee, CA 96161
tahoecancercenter.com

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Michelle Larson, PT, CLT-LANA
Physical Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist

In the Fall, 2016 issue of Tahoe Cancer News, we reported on bringing our personal one-on-one exercise program consultations right to our cancer patients, wherever they are in the Cancer Center and at any point in their treatment plan. We are pushing these boundaries further now by using telemedicine to meet our patients in their own homes with the Walkabout Project. This project will target those who are unable to attend group exercise class due to distance or desire and still encourage them to engage in exercise.

The first step is for participants to meet one-on-one with a physical therapist to agree upon goals and verify technical capabilities. Then 2-4 individuals will form a Walkabout group and meet weekly from their own homes via group Skype for 8 weeks. New strengthening and stretching exercises will be introduced each week. Participants will be encouraged to complete stretching and strengthening exercises 2-3 times per week on their own and also walk most days of the week. They will keep a log of their activities so they can measure their own progress and report to their Walkabout group. The weekly teleconference will also allow participants to share their successes and challenges. Keep moving for your health with the Walkabout project!

If you are interested in participating please contact Michelle Larson, MPT at mlarson@tfhd.com or (530) 582-7415.

Michelle Larson, MPT, CLT-LANA, CET-ACSM is a Physical Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist. She can be reached at (530) 582-6450.
At one time it was thought that the pressure from massage could cause cancer cells to spread. Thankfully advances in our understanding of cancer and cancer treatments have changed the way we support patients today. It is now widely taught that massage is helpful to any patient with cancer at any stage of their condition. Skilled touch often provides comfort, connection, and nurturing to patients and their caregivers.

Anecdotal evidence of how massage has affected those with cancer is dramatic and inspiring. Scientific research at the Touch Research Institute has shown that pain and anxiety consistently improve immediately following a skilled touch session. In studies that measured overall patient satisfaction, patients who received touch therapy perceived their level of care increased and helped them feel calmer with less anxiety, tension, pain or depression.

Oncology Massage is a client-specific, customized massage designed to meet the unique and changing needs of someone in treatment for cancer or with a history of cancer treatment. Patients at Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center may receive massage once a week while they are in active treatment if the schedule allows. Once a patient has completed treatment they can receive a limited number of massages through the support program. They then have the option to continue to receive sessions with the therapists privately at a reduced rate. We also recognize the importance of taking care of our caregivers. They are able to receive some massage during this stressful time through our support service program.

A safe massage plan generally revolves around the side effects of chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery. Because each person and each session is unique, trained therapists are able to use a variety of modalities that are non-invasive and gentle. People that are in treatment require bodywork that is less demanding such as Reiki, acupressure, and craniosacral work. The most common adjustment for Oncology Massage is soothing, nurturing pressure rather than deep or vigorous strokes.
The last issue of Tahoe Cancer News provided some background into the selection process for the art in Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center. Here, and in the next issue, we introduce some of the artists and their works.

When you come into the lobby, look behind the reception desk to see an example of semi-abstract Sierra Nevada art in James Shay’s *Scenic Sierra*. Shay, formerly a professional architect, paints with casein on archival panels, scraping and sanding surfaces to give a visual richness. He finishes with a matte varnish. His paintings evoke the western American landscape with simple shapes, forms and strong color.

*Song*, by Milton D. Heifetz, MD, is a bronze sculpture, sensual in its simplicity and elegance. The wooden base and rock alcove that house it were designed especially to highlight this work of art for the Cancer Center. Milton Heifetz practiced neurosurgery for 40 years, authored *Ethics in Medicine* and invented the “Heifetz Clip,” a commonly used neurosurgical device. He began sculpting in both bronze and marble in 1945. He was also Dr. Laurence Heifetz’ dad.

Pamela Hunt Lee represents the details and power in our natural surroundings in her painting, *Cairn*. The stacked rocks, typically set up as a landmark, offer patients and their caregivers a sense of equilibrium and balance in all of life. Hunt Lee lives in Kings Beach and is an avid outdoor enthusiast. Her art works present her view of the beauty of nature and demand attention through their size and composition.

Organic shapes and bold colors define Brent Baker’s *Florals* and offer the viewer a way to chart thoughts and transcend human spirit. Baker’s work is in several corporate and private collections and is exhibited in numerous galleries throughout the country. It has been commissioned for Nordstrom national department stores and is in his greeting card line available through several fine specialty stores.

Feel free to tour our art at the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center and consider what each of these pieces says to you. Do you find they evoke a sense of power, vibrancy and energy or feelings of peace, hope, comfort and calm?
The Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center has been recognized by the QOPI Certification Program (QCP™), an affiliate of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), as successfully completing a three-year certification program for outpatient hematology-oncology practices that meet nationally recognized standards for quality cancer care. QCP builds on ASCO’s Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI®).

“This certification is a reflection of the excellent work done at our cancer center,” said Melissa Kaime, MD, FACP, Director of Quality Initiatives at the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center. “We are absolutely committed to providing extraordinary, compassionate care to our patients.”

In applying for certification, Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center participated in a voluntary comprehensive site assessment against clearly specified standards that are consistent with national guidelines and was successful in meeting the standards and objectives of QCP.

“AsCO’s QOPI certification recognizes those oncology practices that are committed to delivering the highest quality of cancer care,” said ASCO President Daniel F. Hayes, MD, FASCO. “By achieving certification, these practices have demonstrated their commitment to quality and safety excellence in the care they deliver to patients, as well as to the continuous process of quality improvement.”

QOPI is a voluntary self-assessment and improvement program launched by ASCO in 2006 to help hematology-oncology and medical oncology practices assess the quality of the care they provide to patients. Through the QOPI program, practices abstract data from patients’ records up to twice per year and enter this information into a secure database. More than 900 oncology practices have registered for the QOPI program.

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The QOPI Certification Program was launched in January 2010, and more than 250 practices are currently certified. This certification for outpatient oncology practices is the first program of its kind for oncology in the United States. Oncologists can achieve certification by participating in a voluntary comprehensive site assessment against clearly specified standards that are consistent with national guidelines.

The QCP seal designates those practices that successfully met the standards and objectives of the QOPI Certification Program, which includes scoring above the threshold on the key QOPI quality measures and meeting chemotherapy safety standards established by ASCO and the Oncology Nursing Society. QOPI and the QCP are projects dedicated to innovative quality improvement programs. For more information, please visit: www.instituteforquality.org/qopi-qcp
Sleep is essential for your health and well-being and is reported to be of equal importance as diet and exercise. According to the National Sleep Foundation, a good night’s sleep improves immune function, regulates hormones which balance appetite and metabolism, repairs muscles and tissue, and provides energy to the brain and body.

Ideally, adults are recommended to sleep 7-9 hours per night, teens 8-10, and school children 9-12. Yet, one out of three Americans experience insomnia at some point in their lives and 30-40% of children receive less than adequate sleep. In the short term, loss of sleep affects judgment, mood, memory, and leads to an increased risk of accidents and injury. Long term chronic sleep deprivation disrupts normal immune function, increases inflammation and can lead to major health issues including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and even early mortality.

Recent studies have linked inadequate sleep to the three most common cancers: breast, prostate, and colorectal. A 2013 study published in Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention found that men who suffer from insomnia may be at increased risk for developing prostate cancer. According to a 2010 study published in Cancer, researchers found that people who slept less than 6 hours per night were 50 percent more likely to develop colorectal cancer. A 2012 study of over 200,000 women suggests that women who were chronically sleep deprived were more likely to develop an aggressive breast cancer (Thompson, C.L. & Li, L Breast Cancer Res Treat 2012).

Unfortunately, 30 to 75 percent of people undergoing treatment for cancer experience sleep issues (Curr Treat Options Neurol 2007). The good news is that sleep can be highly beneficial to the healing process during cancer treatment and recovery, and you can improve your sleep! Here are 10 simple, easy strategies to try:

1. **Be Consistent.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, including days off.

2. **Create a Good Sleep Environment.** The bedroom should be dark, quiet, and not too warm. Research suggests the ideal temperature is around 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure you have a good mattress and pillow.

3. **Get Adequate Light Exposure.** Poor sleep is linked to poor light exposure during the day, particularly for people who work in offices and the elderly in homes. Too much screen time, especially in the evening, can also adversely affect sleep.

4. **Prepare Your Body for Sleep with a Relaxing Evening Routine.** Consider reading, soft music, a warm bath or essential oils. Avoid stimulating conversation, television, movies, or social media before bed.

5. **Take Care of Your Body.** Eat meals at regular times, exercise (preferably in the morning) at least 3-5 hours before bedtime, and avoid alcohol, sedatives, and caffeine at least 4 hours before sleep.

6. **Try Taking a Yoga Class.** Yoga has been shown to improve sleep (Yoga for the Treatment of Insomnia, Oncology & Hematology review 2014).

7. **Walk for at Least 60 Minutes a Week.** Walking has been shown to improve sleep in both breast cancer (Cancer Nursing Research, 2001) and lung cancer patients. (British Journal of Cancer, 2016).

8. **Get a Massage.** Therapeutic massage has been shown to improve sleep, as well as reduce pain and anxiety in cancer patients (Freeman L 2009, Mosby’s Complementary and Alternative Medicine: A Research-based Approach).

9. **Reduce Your Stress Levels.** Try practicing meditation or Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for at least a few minutes every day. Resolve arguments before going to bed. Keep a pen and paper next to your bed so you can write down anything you need to remember to do the following day.

10. **Set the Stage for Your Subconscious Mind to Be Peaceful and Happy.** When you lie down in bed, take some long, slow belly breaths, following your breath as it moves in and out. Mentally list things you are grateful for. Try visualizing your dream day, job, relationship, vacation, or life until you drift off to sleep.
What is Biofeedback?

Linda MacKenzie, RN, BCB

Biofeedback uses a patient’s own biology to provide information that can be used to learn self-regulation techniques for reducing stress, pain or other unpleasant conditions.

The process begins with a conversation about anatomy and physiology and the mind/body connection. Sensors are applied to the palm of the hand, around the abdomen or on areas where pain and tension occur. These sensors monitor skin temperature, skin conductivity, heart rate variability, breathing and EMG (the electrical activity that causes muscle contraction).

This information goes into a Biograph Infinity computer that uses an infrared light cable to translate data into a format that the patient can read on a computer screen. Diaphragmatic breathing techniques are taught and the patient can actually see his or her biological results on the screen. What you can see, you can change. The mind is really smart.

In order to create the ideal environment for natural healing to occur, the patient is trained in three physiological states: relaxation, mindfulness and resonance frequency, and is taught:

• refined breathing, producing a wave-form pattern
• autogenic relaxation; raising skin temperature which reduces cold hands and gets blood to small blood vessels, and skin conductance which helps quiet the mind
• heart rate variability training, creating a balance of the sympathetic (stress response) and parasympathetic (relaxation response) in the autonomic nervous system

All three come about from diaphragmatic breathing.

I love to work with cancer patients because I train them in lifelong skills that they can use for all the different areas of their lives that cancer affects.

Linda MacKenzie, RN, BCB is certified through the Biofeedback Certification International Alliance. Linda is also a speaker for the Northwestern Association of Biofeedback and Neurotherapy, presenting her nursing perspectives of Biofeedback and Breath Work that assist her patients in creating the ideal environment for natural healing to occur.

Smiles: Perspectives from an Oncology Nurse

Lisa Wry, RN, BSN, OCN

Whenever anyone asks us what we do for a living, we always answer with, “I’m a nurse.” When the conversation gets into what kind of nursing, we hesitate and then answer with, “oncology nurse.” It’s not that we aren’t proud of what we do, but we try to avoid the response that includes gasps and, “oh, that must be so sad.” In reality, it is the exact opposite. Our patients and their families and friends become our friends. We have many wonderful success stories, and even our patients that do eventually succumb to their disease are an absolute pleasure and honor to take care of. Haring a common goal with our patients, whether it is cure or palliation, gives us a strong bond. Our patients have often expressed to us how much they appreciate that when they come into the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center they are not looked at as their diagnosis, but rather as a person.

Lisa Wry, RN, BSN, OCN has her bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Nevada, Reno and is certified in oncology nursing. Lisa also holds a bachelor’s degree in public relations from California State University, Chico. She has been with the GUMTFCC for four years. As a Northern California native, Lisa loves living in Truckee and enjoying all it has to offer. She can often be found out hiking on the many trails with her husband, Kasey, and two dogs.

I can’t imagine a job more rewarding than when cancer a patient starts to do well.

Anonymous Patient