Breast Cancer is the second most common type of cancer among women in this country. It is estimated that 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

Who’s at Risk?
The exact cause of breast cancer is not known. However, certain risk factors have been identified which may include:
• Age - the risk of breast cancer increases with age.
• Early onset of menstruation (first period before age 12) or late menopause (after age 55).
• Older age at first birth (first pregnancy after age 30) or having never given birth.
• Personal history of breast or ovarian cancer.
• A mother or sister with breast cancer.
• Radiation therapy to chest, especially at a young age.
• Hormone use such as birth control pills for over 3 years.
• Genetic alterations such as BRCA-1 or BRCA-2 mutations.
• Certain lifestyle choices including being overweight, consuming high fat content food and more than one alcoholic drink per day.

Symptoms
Here are a few of the changes that women should watch for:
• A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm.
• Dimpling or puckering of skin of the breast.
• A change in the size or shape of the breast.
• The skin of the breast, areola or nipple may be scaly, red or swollen.
• Nipple discharge.

Detection and Diagnosis
It is important for a woman to talk to her doctor about her risk of getting breast cancer. A number of computer models such as GAIL Model, are available to assess an individual woman’s risk of developing breast cancer. Based on her particular risk, a screening strategy can be implemented. Such screening strategies may help with the detection of cancer at an early stage when it may be more likely to be cured with treatment. Various screening options include:
• Breast self examination
• Breast examination by physician or other health care provider
• Screening mammography

For most women with an average risk for breast cancer, the following may be reasonable recommendations:
• Breast self examination once a month.
• Clinical breast exam once a year.
• Mammogram every 1-2 years.
• Nipple discharge evaluation by your physician.

Breast Cancer Treatment
If cancer in the breast is found, your doctor will determine the best treatment option for you based on the following factors:
• Stage of the disease
• The size of the tumor in relation to the size of the breast.
• The results of the lab tests, such as whether the breast cancer cells depend on hormones to grow.
• Menopausal status
• General health

Many times, women will receive more than one type of treatment. These may include:
• Surgery
• Radiation therapy
• Chemotherapy
• Hormonal therapy
• Biological therapy

You may also be asked by your doctor to consider participating in a clinical trial. Participation in clinical trials not only helps with making strides in treatments for breast cancer, but also may open a door for access to cutting edge therapies.

A diagnosis of breast cancer can be devastating. You and your family may have many different emotions and questions. Many women find that having good information and support services can make it easier to cope. That is where The ECHO Cancer Foundation can help. Whether you have been newly diagnosed, continued on inside
Welcome to the Foundation’s second quarter newsletter. Please look in the following pages for news and updates on services. Let me take this opportunity to announce the establishment of The ECHO Cancer Foundation’s Living Tree. Inspired by individuals, The Tree will act as a tangible memorial or in honor of a loved one. Throughout history, trees have been powerful symbols, a visual representation of strength, endurance, beauty and graciousness. In her poem, Planted a Tree, writer/poet, Lucy Larcom wrote: “He who plants a tree, plants hope.”

The Living Tree will be displayed on the wall in our entryway. It will be handsomely crafted with a sculptured cast bronze trunk and solid North American Oak leaves that will be engraved with the name of the donor. It will continue to grow and flourish with every name that adorns its branches. The beautiful leaves will assure that each honoree will be remembered in perpetuity.

What can Yoga offer me?

Your mind, body and emotions have the best chance of healing when they can find ease. It is well known that STRESS is a major factor in the progression of any disease. Everyday life can be a big effort—and if you are dealing with treatments, appointments, or healing from surgery – the best prescription is peace and relaxation.

In yoga the most important skill we practise is relaxation. How do we do this? We begin with a few minutes to simply slow down the mind and emotions, to focus on a deep, slow, relaxing breath. (It sounds simple, but if you can just do that once or twice a day for five minutes it can be very powerful!) We stretch and move the whole body. We gently work our muscles and joints to restore and regenerate vitality. Moving and breathing deepens circulation and oxygen to the tissues and organs, and gets the vital juices flowing. And they fight each and every day to live and cope with the rigors of treatment, to have a normal life, and to enjoy things that most people take for granted. I have come to admire their strength and courage. Thinking of them helped me when my mother was a patient at ECHO. She passed away in 1998.

One of the fun things I do is to help plan the Cancer Survivor Picnic every October. Before the hospital took on the running, breast cancer, fully stretched, and strengthened, a profound and healing relaxation usually happens. It feels GOOD. Please join us and see for yourself!

Carol Klammer, BA MEd RYT 500
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American Vinyasa Yoga
http://www.vinyasa.com/

Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health
http://www.kripalu.org/

Himalayan Institute
http://www.himalayaninstitute.org/

Breast Cancer continues to undergo cancer treatments or in recovery, the programs and services of The Foundation are available to you. I encourage you to contact Laura for information that might be helpful to you. 603-886-8362 ext. 289

laurasf@echocancerfoundation.com

The ECHO Cancer Foundation is a unique, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing hope, support, guidance, education and complementary therapies to patients, family members and caregivers who have been touched by cancer or any serious blood related disease.

Mission

The ECHO Cancer Foundation

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Executive Director, The ECHO Cancer Foundation

Employee Profile
Jo Anne Banas

Hello! My name is Jo Anne Banas. When I started working at Eastern Connecticut Hematology & Oncology in 1990, the office was small and consisted of five employees, plus Drs. Slater and Jaga. I did basic reception duties, including answering the phones, making patient appointments, billing and filing. I was happy at the end of the day that the work was completed and nothing was left undone. Today, I am the Reception Services Supervisor. We have 44 employees and seven physicians, including two infectious disease specialists. Now, it takes every one of us working very hard to get all of the work done. People say I am most famous I found the office for multi-tasking – I can handle three phone calls for appointments, trouble shooting, scheduling, patients at my desk, one or two physicians needing something urgently—all at one time, and with a smile. I really love my job!

During my fifteen years at ECHO, I have gained better understanding of what our patients and their families go through. They fight each and every day to live and cope with the rigors of treatment, to have a normal life, and to enjoy things that most people take for granted. I have come to admire their strength and courage. Thinking of them helped me when my mother was a patient at ECHO. She passed away in 1998.

One of the fun things I do is to help plan the Cancer Survivor Picnic every October. Before the hospital took on the running, breast cancer, fully stretched, and strengthened, a profound and healing relaxation usually happens. It feels GOOD. Please join us and see for yourself!

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planning committee for that event. I am also involved as a co-chair for the Relay for Life event that will take place in Norwich, on July 9 & 10.

This year, for the first time, I will co-chair an ECHO Cancer Foundation Pancake Breakfast, on June 5th at the East Great Plains Firehouse in Norwich. The funds raised will help patients who may need assistance for transportation, lunch or other services.

Being a part of such an amazing and rapidly growing medical practice gives me great satisfaction. I am proud and honored to work with such a compassionate, dedicated staff.

Innovations in Diagnosis & Treatment of Breast Cancer

This past year has yielded numerous important advances in breast cancer, which are currently available to our patients at ECHO. We have never been more optimistic about the health and welfare of our patients with breast cancer as we are today. Here is a list of new developments and their implications for improved diagnosis and treatment.

1. Genomic Health, Inc. introduced Oncotype DX, a gene test which can analyze 21 relevant genes and predict which patients with lymph node negative breast cancer have a high risk for metastases and which patients have a low risk.

2. PET scanning and MRI scanning can more accurately detect breast cancers in high-risk women than standard mammography. This is particularly important in young women with dense breast tissue, in women with significant fibrocystic disease, and in women with breast implants. Furthermore, PET scanning has proven to be the most accurate imaging modality to detect metastases.

3. The technique of sentinel node biopsy has become standard surgical practice at Backus Hospital, sparing many women the need for extensive surgical dissection of the axillary (armpit) lymph nodes.

4. Aromatase inhibitors (AIs) have conclusively emerged as superior to Tamoxifen for treatment of metastatic breast cancer in postmenopausal women and for postoperative (adjunctive) therapy to prevent recurrences.

5. Targeted therapies, the so-called “magic bullet” that has finally emerged from the shadow of chemotherapy as major players in the treatment of breast cancer. Herceptin and Avastin have been approved for patients with specific types of tumors. These treatments may reduce the relapse rate in early breast cancer and, in conjunction with chemotherapy, prolong survival.

6. Abracee, a new paclitaxel formulation, has a higher response rate, improved survival rate, and reduced toxicity compared to Taxol, the most commonly prescribed chemotherapy for breast cancer.

7. Women with a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancer, or very young women with an increased risk of cancer, can be easily tested for mutations in genes BRCA-1 and BRCA-2. If deleterious mutations are found, treatments such as prophylactic surgery and hormones can reduce or eliminate the future risk of cancer.

With these new innovations, you can readily see our case for optimism. Check our website for more information. www.echoassociates.org

By Dr. Dennis Slater, ECHO Associates Oncologist

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