

Aware!



Prevention and awareness information from The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center



Above: Drs. Bitterman, Percarpio and Ravalese (l to r) in front of HLRCC's new Elekta Synergy.

Right: Careful positioning of a patient by a Radiation Therapist before treatment.



World-Class Technology, World-Class Care

THE BEST CANCER TREATMENTS AVAILABLE ANYWHERE ARE IN USE TODAY AT THE HAROLD LEEVER REGIONAL CANCER CENTER.

The Leever Cancer Center recently purchased two new digital linear accelerators. The Elekta Synergy® machines are part of the world's most advanced radiotherapy system. Our acquisition of this state-of-the-art equipment represents an investment of more than three million dollars and secures our position as an industry leader.

In the past, radiation oncologists compensated for potential changes in the size and position of tumors and surrounding organs by delivering radiation beams to an area that included not only the tumor, but also healthy tissue in the surrounding "margins." Elekta Synergy significantly reduces the size of those margins, thereby protecting more healthy tissue around the tumor.

"Elekta Synergy is the first linear accelerator with integrated three-dimensional imaging," explained Jeffrey Bitterman, M.D., Radiation Oncologist and Medical Director of The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center. "The 3-D technology allows doctors to deliver precisely targeted radiation beams that conform to the exact shape and size of each tumor."

For patients, what happens during treatment will seem remarkably similar to traditional radiation treatment. What is happening, though, is not only different but groundbreaking.

Each Synergy session begins with the generation of a live, real-time image of the patient's tumor. Using that image, the system itself

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www.leevercancercenter.org

World-Class Technology...

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then positions the treatment bed to maximize the ease of both workflow for the radiation team and delivery of the radiation beams. The three-dimensional image then guides the integrated, high-resolution radiation beams directly to the tumor itself, conforming them to its exact shape and size.

This ultra-precise delivery reduces damage to the healthy tissue around a tumor, thereby decreasing the potential toxicity of each treatment. That can mean both quicker recoveries and shorter treatment times for patients.



Treatment delivery by the Elekta Synergy.

THE MISSION OF THE HAROLD LEEVER REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

is to create and foster a healing environment for the care of people with cancer and their loved ones, recognizing that the patient and family are the center of every interaction.

ask the Doctor



**Dr. Jeffrey Bitterman, Radiation Oncologist,
answers your questions about Elekta Synergy®.**

Q How is Elekta Synergy different than other radiation treatments?

A With Elekta Synergy doctors can look at a live, real-time image of your tumor during the treatment process itself. Imaging and treating at the same time means no separate imaging appointment, no films to bring, and no changes in the shape or size of the tumor from the time your films were taken to the time your treatment is administered. Your treatment is more precise and therefore more effective.

Q Will the equipment look different to me?

A At its core, Elekta Synergy is a linear accelerator. Linear accelerators have been used to deliver radiation for many years. That means it probably looks a lot like other equipment you may already be familiar with. For your comfort, it is an open system that is not only easy for you to move in and out of, but with room for our medical staff to walk around you.

Q Will my overall treatment plan change with Elekta Synergy?

A In some cases, a patient's overall treatment plan may be shortened. Because the combined imaging/treatment procedure is the most precise treatment option available, your doctor can treat your tumor more aggressively. That means your doctor may decide to fractionally increase the individual dosages of radiation you receive. This could reduce the overall number of treatments you require. Higher, more effective doses of radiation can be delivered safely using this system. Your doctor will be able to tell you what treatment plan is best for you.

Q What are some of the other benefits of treatment using Elekta Synergy?

A Besides the potential for fewer, more effective treatments, Elekta Synergy's ultra-precise delivery system reduces damage to the healthy tissue surrounding the tumor. This can mean both a quicker recovery and fewer side effects for patients.

During treatment, Elekta Synergy will read the image data it collects, then automatically adjust the position of the table to optimize both workflow for our staff and comfort for our patients. The built-in imaging feature also reduces the need for ink dots and implanted markers to guide physicians as they deliver radiation beams.

Finally, the imaging capabilities of the system mean that tumors that were previously untreatable because of their proximity to organs or the spinal cord may now be treated.

Radiation Therapists

Radiation Therapists are highly skilled, highly regarded health care professionals. They are an integral part of a patient’s treatment plan, putting their educational backgrounds in anatomy, oncology, physiology, radiation biology, math, and medical physics to work each and every day. That’s what the books say. While all that is true, Radiation Therapists are so much more than highly skilled, highly trained clinicians.

“To a lot of patients we’re ‘the girls in the back,’ explained Gayle Crowley, Senior Radiation Therapist at The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center. “We’re the people they see every day; the people who provide emotional support during their treatment.”

Radiation Therapists help develop treatment plans for cancer patients and administer radiation therapy. They are responsible for the accurate delivery of treatment, as well as patient education and all aspects of quality assurance during the treatment process. At one time, the position was called Radiation Technician. The new name better reflects the fact that what is happening “in the back” is highly therapeutic, both physically and emotionally.

“Delivering radiation treatments is, of course, therapeutic on a physical level. But the emotional support Radiation Therapists offer patients and their families is also therapeutic,” noted Gayle Crowley. “We make them laugh. We’re helping them during a very difficult time in their lives.”

Beyond the education and the more than ninety years of combined experience the nine Radiation Therapists at the Leever Cancer Center bring to the table lies a critical and common trait: “We all have the gift of gab,” Gayle laughed.

Deborah Parkinson, HLRCC Operations Manager, noted that, depending upon the cancer being treated, radiation therapy can last as long as 40 days. During that time, patients come in for treatment five days a week.

“We do our best to schedule patients’ treatment in a way that allows them to see the same Radiation Therapist every time they come in. The consistency is important, and the relationships that develop between the Therapist, the patient, and the patient’s family can be as important as the treatment itself” she said.

Gayle Crowley agreed. “Seeing the same smiling, friendly, familiar face on each visit brings a sense of calm and normalcy to a situation that is anything but normal. We prioritize accuracy and timely treatment, but we do so with a sense of humor and compassion built in.”



Liz

Carole



Corky

Diane



Janet

Kerrie



Lana



Gayle



Cheryl

“The emotional support Radiation Therapists offer patients and their families is also therapeutic.”

— Gayle Crowley,
Senior Radiation Therapist

Eating for the Long Haul

YOUR TREATMENT IS COMPLETED AND LIFE BEGINS TO RETURN TO NORMAL. Or does it? Many cancer survivors are inspired to lead healthier lives, but don't know where to begin. Putting good food into their bodies is a great place to start. If you are committed to a lifestyle of good health, you can begin by incorporating the new guidelines for cancer survivors, recently released from the American Institute for Cancer Research, into your everyday life. They are:

1 Be as lean as possible without becoming underweight. People who have excessive body fat increase their risk for cancers of the breast, esophagus, pancreas, colon, rectum and endometrium. They also are at risk for chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

2 Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day. Exercise helps to gain strength, relieve stress, boost self-esteem, reduce anxiety, improve sleep, increase energy AND lose weight.

3 Avoid sugary drinks and energy-dense, processed foods. Diets that are high in calories, fat and sugar and low in overall nutrition contribute to obesity and are often lacking the natural disease-fighting power found in fruits, vegetables and fiber.

4 Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes, such as beans. Aim for five to nine servings a day of these foods that contain disease-fighting antioxidants packaged the way Mother Nature intended. Go for variety and color. Two-thirds or more of your dinner plate should be vegetables and grains.

5 Limit consumption of red meats (beef, pork and lamb) and avoid processed meats. People who consume large quantities of these foods increase their risk of colorectal and prostate cancer. Try some non-meat alternatives at mealtimes for a delicious change from the usual "steak and potatoes."



6 If consumed at all, limit alcohol consumption to two drinks for men and one for women a day. Even one drink can raise the estrogen levels in the body within 90 minutes. This can be a problem for women with hormone-sensitive breast cancer. It also raises the risk of head and neck, esophageal, colorectal and liver cancers. Avoiding alcohol or limiting yourself to one drink just a few times a week is a great start.

7 Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium). Too much salt can contribute to hypertension and, if consumed in large quantities, may increase your risk for stomach cancer. READ LABELS AND WATCH FOR SODIUM!

8 Don't use supplements to protect against cancer. More and more studies are showing that vitamin supplements don't provide the same benefits as eating the foods in which they are found naturally. Some vitamins can actually be harmful and interfere with your medications. But there are instances when you may need to take a supplement. Ask your doctor for advice.

By beginning to put some or all of these suggestions into your life, you will be well on the road to good health!

For more information, you can visit www.aicr.org, or contact our nutritionist, Karen Sabbath, MS, RD at 203-575-5510 or ksabbath@leevercancercenter.org.



The most anticipated and well-attended of the Survivors Week sessions was HLRCC Nutritionist Karen Sabbath's "Lunch & Learn: Putting the Natural Power of Food into Your Life." In true Food Network style, Karen demonstrated cooking techniques, shared tips and recipes, and fed her fans. Here we share a few of the recipes.



GUACAMOLE WITH A TWIST

Ingredients:

- 1 cup frozen peas, defrosted
- 2 large ripe avocados, peeled and seeded
- 1/3 cup scallions, minced
- 1/4 cup bottled salsa
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1/2-1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 cup or more, fresh cilantro
- 2 garlic cloves
- Baked tortilla chips* (see recipe right)

Preparation:

Combine all ingredients (except chips) in a food processor and pulse until just combined. Serve with tortilla chips.

To make homemade tortilla chips, slice white or whole wheat flour tortillas (99% fat free) into sixths. Toss in a large bowl with olive oil, chili powder, garlic powder and cumin. Place on a large jelly roll pan and bake at 400° for about 10 minutes. Chips are done when they start to get golden brown. Do not let them burn. Allow to cool on a cooling rack. Chips will get crisp as they cool.

Serves 8 - 10 as an appetizer.



VEGETARIAN CHILI

Ingredients:

- 2 cups onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tbsp. cumin
- 1 tbsp. coriander
- 1 cup Mexican style salsa
- 2 peppers, one red, one green, both chopped
- 2 15 oz. cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 28 oz. can diced, peeled tomatoes
- 11 oz. package frozen corn
- Salt/pepper/cilantro to taste

Preparation:

In a large pot, cook onions and garlic in water until soft, about 5 minutes. Add spices and stir on high for 1 minute. Stir in salsa and peppers, simmer for 5 minutes. Add black beans and tomatoes, simmer 10 minutes. Add corn and cook 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients to taste. Serve in bowls with brown rice and grated cheese, if desired.

Serves 6 as a main course.



SOUTHWESTERN COLESLAW

Ingredients:

- 1 small or 1/2 medium jicama, sliced into thin strips (about 3 cups)
- 1/4 head red cabbage, thinly sliced (about 5 cups) or 1 bag preshredded red cabbage
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup lowfat mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup lowfat or fat free buttermilk
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1 tbsp. honey or to taste
- Salt and pepper

In a large bowl, toss together the jicama, cabbage, onion and cilantro.

In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, buttermilk, lime juice, honey, salt and pepper.

Pour dressing over the vegetables, toss to combine and allow to sit for at least 20-30 minutes.

Adjust seasoning as needed.

Serves 10, 1 cup each.



Giving Thanks

SURVIVORS DAY, AN HLRCC TRADITION, GOT A MAKEOVER FOR 2008. Last year, Survivors Day became Survivors Week and featured a little bit of something for everyone.

National Cancer Survivors Day is a June event. In the past, The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center celebrated with the rest of the nation. This year, the Leever team considered the true meaning of the day.

“Survivors Day is about celebrating life and appreciating each and every day,” explained Deborah Parkinson, Operations Manager at The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center.

Participants in the Survivors Day Yoga class join Janaki Pierson (second from left), Co-Founder & Executive Director of Woodbury Yoga Center.



“November is a month where all of our thoughts typically turn to giving thanks. It seemed a very appropriate time to bring survivors together in celebration.”

The week-long event featured a variety of programs for survivors and caregivers, from a morning of soft, reflective piano music with Tara Lesco in the HLRCC lobby to Reiki sessions with Reiki Master and Teacher Carol McIlravy and Compassionate Hands. Attendees also learned Yoga and meditation techniques from Janaki Pierson of the Woodbury Yoga Center.

“It is always exciting to bring in complementary medicine programs and activities. There are so many wonderful things out there waiting to be discovered,” Deborah Parkinson said.

Among them is the Lebed Method. The Lebed Method focuses on healing through movement and dance. Certified facilitator Michael Christie led the group at the Leever Cancer Center through a series of fun, easy and therapeutic dance moves designed to both lift the spirit and restore the body.

A Community of Caring

The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center wishes to express its appreciation and a sincere thank you to its neighbors and friends by recognizing the spirit and hard work of the members of our community in fulfilling the Mission of the Leever Cancer Center.



Members of River Glen's Senior Resident Council recently donated more than a dozen books to the Magic Moments Book Club. Holding donated books are (left to right): Dorothy Crawford, River Glen Senior Resident Council President Rose Babasick, and Eleanor Baker.

Magical Moments: A good story can transport its reader in a way that is truly magical. During cancer treatment, magical moments can sometimes be in short supply. Thanks to **Interim HealthCare's** **Lorrie Peterson** and **Joyce Buselli**, families can now share the magic of reading while visiting The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center.

“Even when someone is sick they can almost always sit and read a book with a child,” explained Lorrie Peterson.

“We wanted to create a special book club for children who are waiting for a parent or other family member to have their treatment.”

Working with HLRCC Operations Manager Deborah Parkinson and HLRCC Social Worker Melissa Seres, Joyce and Lorrie created the “Magic Moments Book Club.” Now, a few months and 140 donated books later, the club is flourishing: more than 50 children have taken books home to keep, free of charge.

Books may be donated in honor of a friend or loved one and will feature a bookplate bearing the honoree's name. For more information, contact Joyce Buselli at jbuselli@interimhealthcare.com.

Fall Brought Two New CancerAware Programs to HLRCC...

Does Breast Cancer Run in My Family?

Each year, more than 192,000 American women are diagnosed with breast cancer. Approximately 5 to 10 percent of these women have a hereditary form of the disease.* BRCA1 and BRCA2 (short for breast cancer 1 and breast cancer 2) testing can help identify women whose genetic makeup puts them at risk of developing breast cancer. But who should be tested? More than 70 people attended The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center's recent program to consider that and other questions related to genetic counseling and testing. The well-attended session featured Ellen T. Matloff, MS, Research Scientist and Genetic Counseling Department Director at Yale University's Cancer Center. Ms. Matloff answered many questions about the latest advances in genetic testing and the importance of genetic counseling before undertaking any form of testing.

For more information on genetic testing for breast cancer, please visit www.leevecancercenter.org, link to the American Cancer Society home page, and search "BRCA."

*<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/risk/brca>; National Cancer Institute, U.S. National Institutes of Health

Fundraiser Goes Above and Beyond: When friends and co-workers at Frito-Lay decided to hold a fundraiser to help **Pete Montesano** with medical expenses incurred during his treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Pete said yes and no. He said yes to the fundraiser, but no using the money for his own medical expenses. Instead, Pete promised to donate all of the proceeds from the June golf tournament to three organizations close to his heart, the Leever Cancer Center among them. Pete recently made good on that promise, personally delivering his donation to HLRCC Operations Manager Deborah Parkinson. **Frito-Lay** generously matched Mr. Montesano's donation.



In Memory of Bianca Hernandez-Melendez: Family and friends of Bianca Hernandez-Melendez celebrated her life and memory recently through the third annual **Bianca Hernandez-Melendez Benefit Golf Tournament** and Yankee Candle Sale. The Harold Leever Cancer Center was honored to receive a portion of the event's proceeds again this year.

Living with Prostate Cancer

Living with prostate cancer means managing its treatment, including treatment side effects. Dr. Stephen Siegel of Urology Specialists, PC recently discussed the side effects of prostatectomy and hormonal therapy with the large crowd gathered at The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center. The event also featured the Leever Center's own Dr. Bernard Percarpio. Dr. Percarpio helped patients understand side effects commonly occurring with brachytherapy and image guided radiation therapy.

CancerAware programs are free and open to the public. Visit www.leevecancercenter.org to see a complete schedule of the Leever Cancer Center's upcoming events.

Aware!

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We encourage your feedback.
If there is a cancer topic you
would like covered, to respond to
an article you've read, or to be put
on our mailing list, please call
203-575-5555 or email:
teamleever@leevecancercenter.org



The Right Team. Right Here.



THE HAROLD LEEVER
REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

1075 Chase Parkway
Waterbury, CT 06708
voice 203-575-5555
fax 203-575-5556

The future is **now**

PET/CT (Positron Emission Tomography/Computed Tomography) is a unique, state-of-the-art diagnostic tool that helps physicians effectively pinpoint the source of cancer.

A non-invasive test, this powerful tool combines metabolic and anatomic imaging, providing a more complete picture and making it easier for your doctor to diagnose problems, determine the extent of disease, prescribe treatment, and track progress. The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center is widely recognized as a leader in the use of PET/CT scan technology.

We conduct PET/CT scans every weekday, Monday through Friday, usually the same week they are requested; most results are available within 24 hours.

To find out more about PET/CT scans at HLRCC, call us at 203-575-5501, or visit www.leeverpet.com.

“If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves.”

— Thomas Edison



THE HAROLD LEEVER
REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

1075 Chase Parkway
Waterbury, CT 06708

Community Events & Monthly Support Groups

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S SURVIVORS SOCIAL: Thursday, March 12, 5:30 PM, contact ACS at 203-756-8888

NUTRITION MONTH "GO WITH THE GRAIN": Tuesday, March 31, 11:30 AM – 1PM. Space is limited, reservations are required: 203-575-5555

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S GREATER WATERBURY RELAY FOR LIFE: June 6 – 7, Crosby High School, contact ACS at 203-756-8888 or www.cancer.org

THYROID CANCER SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, last Tuesday, 6 PM – 7 PM, contact Dot Torretta at 203-753-8833 x366

REIKI SESSIONS BY COMPASSIONATE HANDS: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays by appointment, contact Carol McIlravy at 203-723-2552

WOMAN TO WOMAN BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 7 PM – 9 PM, contact Theresa Lombardo at 860-274-2200

BRAVE AT HEART BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 2nd Wednesday, 7 PM – 9 PM, contact Anne Pringle at 203-910-7582

CT MULTIPLE MYELOMA FIGHTERS SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 6 PM – 8 PM, contact Robin Tuohy at 203-206-3536

HOPE MUTUAL AID GROUP FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR LOVED ONES: monthly, 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 12 PM – 1 PM, contact Melissa Seres at 203-575-5511

BETTER BREATHING CLUB: monthly, 3rd Friday, 1 PM, contact Rachel Kirchner at 203-757-4991

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY: LOOK GOOD, FEEL BETTER!: monthly, 1st Monday, either 2 PM – 4 PM or 4 PM – 6 PM, contact the ACS at 203-756-8888

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY: REACH TO RECOVERY: by appointment, contact the ACS at 203-756-8888

WATERBURY AREA OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 1st Monday, 7 PM – 9 PM, contact Ursula Daiber at 860-274-4601

Please call contact person to confirm that group is running as scheduled. Meeting times may be rescheduled to accommodate holidays or special meetings. See www.leevercancercenter.org for ongoing community events.

Spring