



April 2006 Volume 10, Number 2

[Questions to Ask Before Breast Surgery](#)

[Support National Priorities](#)

[Relay for Life](#)

[A Survivor's Story](#)

[Touch of Courage Support Group](#)

[Donations Welcomed](#)

[Breast Cancer Edu-Action](#)

Cedar Valley Cancer Committee
1607 Heath Street
Waterloo, IA 50703
319-232-3219

Website: www.cedarvalleybreastcancer.org

Touch of Courage

. Connection
Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BREAST SURGERY

taken from www.Thebreastcaresite.com which is sponsored by Amoe na

The impact of suddenly confronting a life threatening illness like breast cancer can overwhelm the most disciplined brain. The mind enters fight or flight mode, where every decision is about survival with little thought for details.

Breast cancer survivors who have undergone surgery as part of their treatment often describe the entire period between diagnosis and surgery as "a big blur." With their minds still stunned by the diagnosis, they attempt to discuss surgery with their doctor, only to find themselves unable to follow information or articulate questions effectively.

To help get all the facts down, many patient counselors suggest bringing along a spouse or friend who can help ask questions and retain answers. Others suggest writing down all

the questions you can think to ask before your scheduled appointment, then writing down or tape recording the answers.

You may also find other professionals in the physician's or surgeon's office that can help answer many of these questions as well.

- What is the name for the type of breast cancer I have?
- Why is surgery recommended?
- Are there non-surgical alternatives?
- What is the alternative?
- What is the name for the type of surgery that I am to undergo?
- Will I be sedated or will I undergo general anesthesia?
- What are the risks of this type of surgery?
- Do I have any medical conditions that will make this surgery riskier?
- Will I need plastic or reconstructive surgery after this procedure? If so, can it be done at the same time? If not, how long should I wait?
- Will reconstructive surgery make it harder to detect a recurrence of the cancer in the affected breast?
- If I do not have reconstructive surgery, are there prosthetic products available for the affected breast? How about for a lumpectomy?
- How long will I be in the operating room?
- How long will I be in recovery?
- Will I then go home, go to a regular room or to ICU?
- How soon can I have visitors?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- How much pain will I be in?
- Will I receive medication for the pain?
- Do you have pictures of women that have undergone similar surgery?
- What kind of scar will I have?
- Are there steps I can take to lessen the appearance of my scar?
- Will I have lymph nodes removed? If so, how many?
- Will this put me at increased risk for lymphedema?
- How will we know if the surgery was a success?
- How soon after my surgery will I see you and get a progress report?
- Will I have a drain attached to the affected area when I am discharged? If so, will I get instructions on how to use it?
- How soon after my discharge should I come back to see you for follow up?
- What are the restrictions on what I can do at home?
- Will I be given written instructions for home care when I am discharged?
- Can you recommend a counselor for my emotional well-being if I need someone to talk to?
- Will I need physical therapy?
- What else am I likely to undergo as part of my overall treatment plan?

You should also take along some blank paper to jot down last minute questions or instructions as they occur. Remember, it's normal to have a hard time staying focused

when your health is threatened. Making question lists like this one, and writing down the answers is a healthy way to keep your facts straight while you concentrate on the battle ahead.

Support National Priorities

The National Breast Cancer Coalition's goal is the eradication of breast cancer. Each year they determine their legislative priorities. As an organizational member of NBCC, the Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force supports these national priorities:

- 1) Guaranteed access to quality healthcare for all. We will not end breast cancer until all women have guaranteed access to quality health care regardless of their ability to pay.
- 2) \$150 million dollar appropriation for the Department of Defense peer-reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program for fiscal year 2007.
- 3) Passage of legislation that would authorize funding for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to research links between breast cancer and the environment.
- 4) Preservation of the Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program.

If you support the eradication of breast cancer, join the [Iowa Breast Cancer Advocacy Network \(www.iowabreastcancer.org\)](http://www.iowabreastcancer.org) or call Christine Carpenter at (319) 266-0194. Your voice can make a real difference in the fight against breast cancer by impacting our Iowa lawmakers' votes!

2006 Relay for Life

This last year has passed quickly and again it is time for the Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force team to be rested and ready for the 2006 Relay for Life. The Relay will be held on Friday June 9 through Saturday, June 10, 2006 at Hawkeye Community College. The Task Force has sponsored a team since 2000 and has raised more than \$8,000 over those years. The funds are used to raise awareness, support research and help in the treatment and future cure of all types of cancers.

Last year our team had 31 team members dedicating fund raising and 1-hour walking times to help raise money for the American Cancer Society.



Relay Team Captain Marie Iverson needs your help!

If you are interested in becoming a part of the team and/or want information regarding this event, please feel free to contact her at 319-233-1398 after 6:00 p.m. weekdays and most times on weekends. You may also contact the American Cancer Society at 319-272-2880.

Help us find the cure. Join a team today!

A Survivor's Story

By Karen Kerr

I was 67 with 13 1/2 years of "clean" mammograms and I was feeling as if I'd beat the breast cancer rap well, until I'd go for a mammogram each year and I'd get that funny feeling and my blood pressure would go up. But after all those years, it finally happened. I got a call from the doctor's office saying that I'd need to go for more tests. What a whammy.

Luckily, (using the term loosely) I had a mass, not yet a lump, which meant that I would have a stereotactic procedure done the next week. After an hour long needle biopsy the tests came back that something would need to be done soon. By now I was NOT a happy camper. The prognosis was that I could have other masses lurking since my body produces positive estrogen cancer cells. I felt the best decision to make was to take the breast.

On the day of surgery, I went in early and had a procedure where they put dye into my breasts. X-rays were taken periodically throughout the next four hours to see the flow of dye towards the sentinel node. When and if it reached that node would determine how many lymph nodes needed to come out to be tested.

I try to attend as many cancer support meetings that I can. I may be a school counselor, but I need help too. Every time I dress for the day, I say a prayer of thanks, even as a tear falls because of my body's appearance which is drastically different from most women. It hurts me to see young women victims. It hurts not to have found a cause or cure for

breast cancer. It hurts to hear promotions declaring "if you do this or do that you may prevent cancer". Beans! Not true!

I want to speak out and let others know that life goes on. To any or all of you who have had to deal with a double mastectomy, please feel free to call me or come to the support group. Please don't sit at home as we all need your support and you may need ours.

I want to thank my husband, family members and friends who helped me to doctor appointments, sent well wishes and got me through it all. I know that I must live each day to its fullest and be the best I can be.

Touch of Courage Breast Cancer Support Group

The Touch of Courage Breast Cancer Support Group continues to meet on the first Monday of every month (unless it's a holiday). Meetings are held at the Kimball Ridge Center on 2101 Kimball Avenue. The meetings are held at 1:30 and 5:30 pm.

In May, Dr. Davis will speak at the 5:30 meeting on "Cancer Screening". In June, Epidemiologist Sue Joslyn will speak at the 5:30 meeting and in August, Tina Vier will speak to both groups. Tina's topic is "Look Good, Feel Better". Pharmacist Phil Colbert will speak to both groups in October and in December the Task Force will give a presentation to the group.

The Support Group invites any woman or man who is dealing with breast cancer to attend the support group meetings. Spouses and significant others are also welcome.

Donations Welcomed

The Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force welcomes donations to enable us to bring services and support to those living with breast cancer. You may not be aware that you can direct your United Way contribution to any 501(c)3 organization, not just United Way organizations. The Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force has 501(c)3 status making your donation tax deductible.

Another way to keep donations local, is to direct memorials for departed friends or family to the Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force. We are a volunteer organization, so 100% of our funds go to providing services in our community.

A new service is under development by the Cedar Valley Task Force. It is our program to help low-income women with medical expenses related to their breast cancer that are not covered by any other program. We know there is a great need, and it will take a significant amount of money to meet these needs. Any assistance with this program would be appreciated. You may use the donation coupon on the back page of the newsletter, or contact Barb Daniels, Treasurer, at 232-3219 with questions.

Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-Action

Who Are We?

Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-Action includes breast cancer survivors and their supporters. We are members of the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee. **Our mission** is to serve as a catalyst for the prevention and cure of breast cancer.

What We've Done

- Visited with our congressional representatives to secure their commitment to breast cancer research.
- Participated in fax and letter campaigns to Congress for a commitment to a national strategy for the fight against breast cancer.
- Created the Iowa Breast Cancer Resource Guide, secured funding and distributed 4000+ copies
- Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-Action is a subcommittee of the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee

We Meet:

When: 7:00 p.m. on the 4th
Thursday of each month

Where: Area Education Agency 7
Special Education Building
Conference Room 5

Need more information?

Call Christine Carpenter
319-266-0194

Support and Rehabilitation Programs

Care and Share	Support group for anyone dealing with cancer. Meets the 1 st Tuesday of every month at 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
Touch of Courage	Breast cancer support group. Meets the 1 st Monday of every month at 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
Reach to Recovery	Provides information and support for women who are faced with breast cancer. Visits available before and after surgery.
Look Good...Feel Better	Consultation with a trained cosmetologist to help a cancer patient feel more comfortable with the physical changes that occur during treatment.

For more information call the American Cancer Society at 319-272-2880 or 888-266-2064.

Resources Available

Information, support, counseling, and educational materials are available from the following:

Allen College of Nursing
Library and Media Center
1825 Logan Avenue
Waterloo, IA 50703
(319) 235-2005

Breast Care Center
at United Medical Park
1753 West Ridgeway
Waterloo, IA 50701
319-833-6100

National Cancer Institute
1-800-4CANCER

National Lymphedema Network
1-415-923-3680

Covenant Lymphedema Therapy
319-272-7894

American Cancer Society
2101 Kimball Avenue, Suite 130
Waterloo, IA 50702
319-272-2880 or 888-266-2064
1-800-ACS-2345 (available 24 hrs)

Covenant Cancer Treatment Center
200 E. Ridgeway Avenue
Waterloo, IA 50702
319-272-2800
Includes Cancer Information Library

National Coalition for Cancer
Survivorship 1-505-764-9956

Y-Me
1-800-986-8228

Physical Therapy Partners
Lymphedema Therapy
319-233-6995

