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# Touch of Courage

## Connection Beyond Pink TEAM

### Breast Cancer and Pregnancy National Cancer Institute

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Breast cancer is the most common cancer in pregnant and postpartum women, occurring in about 1 in 3,000 pregnant women. The average patient is between 32 and 38 years of age and, with many women choosing to delay childbearing, it is likely that the incidence of breast cancer during pregnancy will increase.

The natural tenderness and engorgement of the breasts of pregnant and lactating women may hinder detection of discrete masses, and therefore, early diagnoses of breast cancer. Delays in diagnoses are common, with an average reported delay of 5 to 15 months from the onset of symptoms. Because of this delay, cancers are typically detected at a later stage than in a nonpregnant woman of the same age. To detect breast cancer, pregnant women and lactating women should practice self-examination and undergo a breast examination as part of the routine prenatal examination by a doctor. If an abnormality is found, diagnostic approaches such as ultrasound and mammography may be used. With proper shielding, mammography poses little risk of radiation exposure to the baby.

Some factors associated with pregnancy are known to reduce a woman's chance of developing breast cancer later in life:

- The younger a woman has her first child, the lower her risk of

developing breast cancer during her lifetime.

- A woman who has her first child after the age of 35 has approximately twice the risk of developing breast cancer as a woman who has a child before age 20.
- A woman who has her first child around age 30 has approximately the same lifetime risk of developing breast cancer as a woman who has never given birth.
- Having more than one child decreases a woman's chances of developing breast cancer. In particular, having more than one child at a younger age decreases a woman's chances of developing breast cancer during her lifetime.
- Although not fully understood, research suggests that pre-eclampsia, a pathologic condition that sometimes develops during pregnancy, is associated with a decrease in breast cancer risk in the offspring, and there is some evidence of a protective effect for the mother.
- After pregnancy, breastfeeding for a long period of time (for example, a year or longer) further reduces cancer risk by a small amount.

Some factors associated with pregnancy are known to increase a woman's chances of developing breast cancer:

- After a woman gives birth, her risk of breast cancer is temporarily increased. This temporary increase lasts only for a few years.
- A woman who during her pregnancy took DES (diethylstilbesterol), a synthetic form of estrogen that was used between the early 1940s and 1971, has a slightly higher risk of developing breast cancer. (So far, research does not show an increased breast cancer risk for their female offspring who were exposed to DES before birth. These women are sometimes referred to as “DES daughters”.)

There are a number of misconceptions about what can cause breast cancer. These include, but are not limited to, using deodorants or antiperspirants, wearing an underwire bra, having a miscarriage or induced abortion, or bumping or bruising breast tissue. Even though doctors can seldom explain why one person gets cancer and another does not, it is clear that none of these factors increase a woman’s risk of breast cancer. In addition, cancer is not contagious; no one can “catch” cancer from another person.

A woman can be an active participant in improving her chances for early detection of breast cancer. NCI recommends that, beginning in their 40s, women have a mammogram every year or two. Women who have a higher than average risk of breast cancer (for example, women with a family history of breast cancer) should seek expert medical advice about whether they should be screened before age 40, and how frequently they should be screened.

## Peroxide Power!

by Cindy Harris

We all want less toxic homes, so think about replacing your household cleaners with peroxide. Peroxide will clean and disinfect counter tops, table tops, cutting boards, refrigerators, stoves, bathroom fixtures, floors, toys, highchairs, bed frames, mirrors and on and on. And it won't leave a strong smell like bleach, just a fresh clean smell. Pour a cup of peroxide in a load of white clothes to brighten and whiten them. If you have a blood spot, pour full strength peroxide on it and let set a minute. Rub, rinse and repeat if necessary.

Peroxide kills MORE germs than your household cleaners costing about \$3.95 a bottle. Peroxide is less than \$1.00 (some places it is about 50 cents) which will save you a LOT of money while keeping your home closer to chemical free. Anything that you can put on open wounds has to be better for your family than a toxic, poisonous cleaner.

If you want to keep a spray bottle of peroxide handy for cleaning purposes (either full strength or a 50/50 solution of water and peroxide), make sure the bottle you use filters out light since peroxide breaks down quickly once exposed to light.

## For Your Bookshelf

[www.theBreastCareSite.com](http://www.theBreastCareSite.com)

Author Mary Olsen Kelly has managed to break away from the standard self-help template somewhat in this book by attempting to teach her readers how to embrace their imperfections and turn them into gifts. *Path of the*

*Pearl* uses the pearl as a metaphor for personal growth. The pearl oyster, invaded by an irritant it is unable to expel, manages to turn adversity into one of nature’s most beautiful and compelling works of art. Kelly acknowledges and celebrates the similar path shared by women, particularly as they traverse the obstacles often presented to them in mid-life.

By using this gentle and reassuring approach for self-exploration, the author hopes to allow her readers to connect with their deeper selves to evaluate their progress on life’s path, all the while reminding them that even life’s most painful challenges are often transformed into something quite beautiful.

## 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 at the **Kimball Ridge Center on 2101 Kimball Avenue**. The meetings are held at 1:30 and 5:30 p.m.

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.



## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of Accomplishments

On October 19, 2007 the Beyond Pink TEAM held their annual celebration luncheon. This year the event was held at the Barrett Forum on the Allen College of Nursing campus. The luncheon is a time to celebrate the accomplishments of a group of dedicated volunteers. It is also a chance to honor women living with breast cancer.

Guest speaker for the luncheon was Paula Pecenka, a young survivor diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 25. Young survivorship is one of the issues the Beyond Pink TEAM is examining and Paula has helped the TEAM to recognize some of the additional difficulties a young wife and mother of young children who is also employed outside the home experiences. The Beyond Pink TEAM will be working on ways to help ease stresses for young survivors.



**Paula Pacenka, Speaker**

One of the Beyond Pink TEAM members is honored each year for their dedication to our organization. This year Ellen Duffy was recognized for her work for Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action (a sub-group of Beyond Pink TEAM). Ellen had joined IBCE many years ago when her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She wanted to do what she could to help with the cause, and twice went to Washington, DC to attend the National Breast Cancer Coalition Annual Advocacy Conference and Lobby Day. A few years ago, Ellen was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. She continues to give her time to Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action, while she fights her own battle with the disease.

Next year our luncheon will be at Covenant Medical Center. Please contact Dee Hughes at 319-235-3179 if

you are a breast cancer survivor and would like to be included on our mailing list.



**Ellen Duffy, Member Recognition**

Thank you to everyone who gives their time to the Beyond Pink TEAM and their projects. It takes many dedicated people giving their time to accomplish the many things we do in a year. Together we make a difference.

## Men in Skirts

The Beyond Pink TEAM wishes to thank Vicki Holmes and Triple D's Tavern for the generous donation of \$810 to help pay for mammograms for women in Fayette county. Vicki, a breast cancer survivor herself, wanted women in her county to have access to mammograms, regardless of their financial situation. She took a creative approach to her fundraising by enlisting the help of Triple D's Tavern and several men in the community. The men agreed to wear pink skirts to local bars and solicit donations for her cause. Those who donated were able to autograph the skirts. She raised over \$1500 and plans to make this an annual event. Thanks Vicki for your creativity and generosity!



**Vicki Holmes and Gabbi Dewitt display a pink skirt.**

## Pink Ribbon Run

The first annual Pink Ribbon Run in downtown Cedar Falls was a great success. On October 6, more than 170 runners and walkers gathered on a beautiful Saturday morning to raise breast cancer awareness and funds for the Beyond Pink TEAM.



The Cedar Falls Community Main Street, Inc. and volunteers from downtown businesses did a wonderful job of organizing the Pink Ribbon Run. They made it a fun event for everyone. All participants received a T-shirt, with special ones for the breast cancer survivors. Awards were given out for overall winners, as well as age brackets.



The Beyond Pink TEAM was very fortunate to be selected to receive the proceeds of the run. The organizers wanted the money raised to be used for breast cancer and stay local. Luckily they were told about the Beyond Pink TEAM. We are a non-profit organization of local volunteers. All money donated to us stays in the Cedar Valley to provide the support group, this newsletter, the Iowa Breast Cancer Resource Guide,

Breast Cancer Bears, scholarships for breast cancer conferences, and now financial assistance through the Beyond Pink Fund. We also do advocacy work, which ranges from legislative issues to making sure that services are available locally to all women and men with breast cancer.

The Pink Ribbon Run will be an annual event, so watch for information next September about the 2008 run. What a great way to get your whole family involved in supporting breast cancer awareness.

## Cancer and Sexuality by Jeanne Mullen

Coping with sexual concerns when diagnosed and treated for breast cancer may be very difficult. Maintaining open communication with your partner and members of your health care team, as well as taking steps to improve your self esteem, may help.

One of the most common problems regarding cancer and sexuality is people's reluctance to talk about it. Communication is the key to coping with this difficult topic. Sharing thoughts, feelings and fears with your partner is essential to maintaining an intimate relationship with that person. You and your partner can work toward finding other ways to express yourselves beyond intercourse, such as gentle touching, holding hands, kissing, hugging and sharing emotional closeness.

The impact of cancer and treatment can be closely linked to body image. You may have a different view of your body after diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer. You may have temporary or permanent changes in your body. This all may contribute to loss of confidence in the way you look. Give yourself time to adjust to these changes.

There are resources on the Internet dealing with sexuality issues. The American Cancer Society has a free booklet on this subject entitled, "Sexuality and Cancer for the Woman Who Has Cancer and Her Partner". This can be ordered by calling 1-800-227-2345. Resources are also available through the Living Beyond Breast Cancer organization at [www.lbbc.org](http://www.lbbc.org) or by calling 1-800-227-2345.



## A Survivor's Story by Julie Borton

Being diagnosed with breast cancer is scary enough, but imagine being 13 weeks pregnant and getting that diagnosis.

It was at my 12 week prenatal visit that a suspicious spot was found on my left breast. My OB doctor thought that it was inflamed breast ducts from being pregnant. However, just to be safe she sent me over to Covenant's Breast Center to have it checked out. While over there the doctor did an ultrasound which appeared normal, and then did a needle biopsy just to put everyone at ease, so he thought. To everyone's disbelief, including the doctor's, the biopsy came back with malignant cells. On February 5, 2007 an excisional biopsy was done. That is the day that will haunt me forever. The official diagnosis: breast cancer, Stage 2 invasive ductal carcinoma.

So there I was 13 weeks pregnant and scared not only for my life but for our unborn child, the two girls at home, my husband and our families. What was the next step...termination of the pregnancy, mastectomy and chemo while pregnant or start treatment after pregnancy???

Termination was not an option for us. So we decided the first step was to continue the pregnancy and have a mastectomy. February 19, 2007 I had a radical left mastectomy. They removed 17 lymph nodes and two came back positive, all of the margins were clear.

After a consult in Iowa City with

their oncology staff and high risk prenatal clinic the decision was made to start chemo while pregnant. Breast cancer is very treatable and their goal was to cure me and have a healthy baby. I think this was the most positive appointment I could have had while being shell-shocked. Crazy as it sounds chemotherapy (Adriamycin and Cytoxan) are safe to have and will not harm the baby.

The next five months became a whirlwind. Chemo every 21 days at Covenant Oncology, prenatal visits every two weeks at the Rellihan, Weno and Hines Clinic for Women to monitor the growth of the baby. Other than not gaining weight, there were no complications during the pregnancy. My body handled the chemo well, the hair loss was traumatic for me but it was just another obstacle to overcome.

Jonathan was born at Covenant Medical Center on July 5, 2007, six weeks early, with no major complications. He was 5 lbs. 5.6 oz., and 18 inches long. He was in NICU for five days and went home, only to return at 12 days old due to periodic breathing episodes. He spent 10 more days in the hospital.

It is now 10 months after my diagnosis and we have a healthy baby boy. I have completed all my treatments. I am now preparing to have a right mastectomy and a hysterectomy.

If I could give any advice it would be to explore all options, know that chemo is possible while pregnant, keep your faith and keep living for tomorrow. I could not have made it through this without my trust in God, and

the support of my husband, my family, friends and the community.

I am more than happy to share more details about my experience either personally or view my Web site at:

[www.caringbridge.org/visit/julieborton](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/julieborton)

To contact me personally, call me at 319-239-0534 or my e-mail address is: [bjborton@netins.net](mailto:bjborton@netins.net)



There are many supportive sites online for women who are going through breast and other cancers. Some of these sites are:

[www.womenstories.org](http://www.womenstories.org)  
Inspiration and information from breast cancer survivors.

[www.breast-cancer-esources.com](http://www.breast-cancer-esources.com)  
Website listing related breast cancer sties.

[www.StayingAbreast.com](http://www.StayingAbreast.com)  
Rehabilitation Exercises for Breast Cancer Surgery

[www.GildasClub.com](http://www.GildasClub.com)  
Emotional and social support for anyone touched by cancer.

*Printing Donated by:*



## Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-Action

Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-Action includes breast cancer survivors and their supporters. We are members of the Beyond Pink TEAM. **Our mission** is to: take Action, Educate, Advocate, Make a difference (TEAM).

### What We've Done

For the last ten years we have:

- ❖ Visited with Iowa congressmen to secure their commitment to breast cancer research.
- ❖ Participated in email and phone call campaigns to Congress to secure guaranteed access to quality care for all.
- ❖ Created the Iowa Breast Cancer Resource Guide, secured funding, and distributed 9000+ free copies
- ❖ Translated the ACS Guide "For Women Facing Breast Cancer" into Serbo-Croatian for the Bosnians in Iowa

### We Meet:

**When:** 6:30 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month, except November when we meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, and December when we do not meet.

**Where:** Area Education Agency 267, 3706 Cedar Heights Drive, Cedar Falls, Special Education Building, Child Find Room

### Need more Information?

Email or call:

[Christine.carpenter@cfu.net](mailto:Christine.carpenter@cfu.net)

(319) 266-0194

### Support and Rehabilitation Programs

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Care and Share          | Support group for anyone dealing with cancer. Meets the 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month at 1:30 p.m.                                     |
| Touch of Courage        | Breast cancer support group. Meets the 1 <sup>st</sup> 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

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)

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

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

National Cancer Institute  
1-800-4CANCER

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

National Lymphedema Network  
1-415-923-3680

Y-Me  
1-800-986-8228

Covenant Lymphedema Therapy  
319-272-7894

Physical Therapy Partners  
Lymphedema Therapy  
319-233-6995

### Connect with us...

A donation for Touch of Courage is both needed and appreciated. All donations go to support the services of the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee and are tax deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\$\_\_\_\_\_ amount of donation

General Donation  Newsletter Donation  NBCC Scholarship Fund

Make checks payable to the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee and send to 1607 Heath Street, Waterloo, IA 50703