

KNOWING you



COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK

HAND IN HAND FOR YOUR HEALTH



Cancer

The Good News and Not-So-Good News

According to a recent overview published by the American Cancer Society (ACS), overall cancer death rates were somewhat lower in 2004 than they were in 1975 after trending upward slightly until the early '90s. For a nation that confidently declared war on cancer more than 35 years ago, there appears to be considerable room for improvement.

More good news/bad news from the ACS:

- Cancer incidence rates in the U.S. have dropped .6 percent per year since 1992, the peak year for the statistic.
- Declines in cancer rates were led by men and by people 65 and older.
- Among cancers showing a lower incidence were cancers of the prostate, lung (in men), colorectal,

ovarian, oral cavity, stomach and cervix.

- There has been a significant drop in incidence of invasive breast cancer in women since 1999, while lung cancer rates for women have recently stabilized.
- Among cancers showing little or no change were multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, leukemia, and cancers of

the corpus uteri, bladder, pancreas and brain.

- Cancers actually showing an increased incidence were melanoma and cancers of the kidney, liver, thyroid and esophagus.

The very good news is this:

Some cancers are preventable and ACS reports significant health gains due to individual lifestyle changes and a decline in tobacco use.

CHN hopes to reduce the risk of cancer in our community by providing a number of informative programs, support group and resources. *Working together with doctors, healthcare groups, businesses and local residents, we can make a real difference.*

Source: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org

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The Big Picture

Colon Cancer Tests

If you're like most people, you aren't exactly thrilled with the idea of having your colon checked for irregularities. Let's face it, even if the tests were as quick and convenient as taking a Polaroid, many people would still find excuses to opt out of the picture. Fortunately, CHN is helping to save lives by preventing colorectal problems before they start.

Colon 101

The Mayo Clinic reports that approximately 112,000 people are diagnosed with colon cancer—cancer of the large intestine—each year. Most cases begin with the development of small, precancerous (benign) polyps that often go unnoticed. If these polyps go undetected or untreated for too long, they may become cancerous.

Patients often wait until they experience symptoms like blood in the stool, painful cramping and abdominal pain before consulting a physician. Regular screening can help physicians identify benign polyps and treat them before they become cancerous.

“If you have a family history of colon cancer, with first-degree relatives—that is a grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, brothers or sisters—you should get a colonoscopy 10 years before your family members were first diagnosed,” said Tom Willett, an M.D. who practices for CHN in Berlin, Ripon and Wild Rose, and who has been performing colonoscopies for more than 30 years.

There are a wide variety of methods physicians use to

detect colorectal cancer and precancerous polyps.

The colonoscopy, which provides a view of the patient's entire colon, is the most thorough screening method available. This procedure involves the use of a colonoscope, which is a slender tube with a tiny camera attached to it.

Besides a colonoscopy, your physician may recommend a stool blood test or perform a flexible sigmoidoscopy. Similar to a colonoscopy, the procedure involves an instrument called the sigmoidoscope, which only allows the physician to view the lower part of the colon.

According to Willett, patients under 50 should have blood tests and sigmoidoscopies, whereas patients 50 and older should have a colonoscopy. Individuals regardless of age with family histories of colon cancer, or who have rectal bleeding or sudden

No one can stress the importance of having a colonoscopy more than Dr. Tom Willett, who has been performing them for over 30 years.

changes in bowel movements, should contact their physician immediately.

“At this stage in our knowledge of medicine, we think that when a polyp starts it takes seven years before it becomes a cancer,” said Willett. “That's why every five years, if you have polyps or if you have a family history of colon cancer, you need to be tested. If you don't have a family history and don't have polyps on your screening exam, then we usually recommend every 10 years.”

For detailed information and testing guidelines, consult your CHN physician or visit www.Cancer.org. The colonoscopy is an easy procedure that can save your life. Don't wait, schedule your appointment today. You'll be glad you did.



Your Birthday Suit

More Than a Trivial Pursuit

Q. What is the largest organ in the body?

A. The skin.

Believe it or not, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer, making up nearly half of all cancer diagnoses in the U.S. Over a million cases of non-melanoma skin cancer are diagnosed in the U.S. each year, but it's the melanomas—which can be deadly—that people really need to look out for.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), the five-year survival rate for localized melanomas is 99 percent. But survival rates for regional and distant stages are 65 percent and 15 percent respectively. About 80 percent of melanomas are found at a localized stage, so if we can improve early-stage detection, we can hope to improve the five-year survival rate for all melanoma patients, which is currently 91 percent.

According to Tom Rozum, a CHN dermatologist who practices in Berlin and Wautoma, self-examination is an important first step toward detection and prevention of harder-to-treat melanomas.

“People should look for new skin lesions that are enlarging and don't look like other routine skin lesions they might have,” said Rozum. “Also, lesions that persist for longer than a couple of months and bleed are important to note, as well as lesions that are more than one color.”

The ACS recommends watching for these signs:

- Any change on the skin, especially in the size or color of a mole or other darkly pigmented growth or spot, or a new growth.
- Scaliness, oozing, bleeding, or change in the appearance of a bump or nodule.
- The spread of pigmentation beyond its border such as dark coloring that spreads past the edge of a mole or mark.
- A change in sensation, itchiness, tenderness or pain.

Rozum also emphasizes the importance of protecting your skin to minimize the risk of skin cancer. This is especially important for people with high-risk factors such as fair complexion, family history of skin cancer and multiple or atypical moles.

“People need to use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater paying careful attention to the nose, ears and lips,” said Rozum. “For added protection, use a daily moisturizer that contains sunscreen, avoid the sun during peak hours and wear protective clothing whenever possible.”

Rozum adds, “We have seen an alarming rate of skin cancer in teens and younger adults due to the increased use of tanning beds and regular sun exposure.”



The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) and the Skin Cancer Foundation suggests six steps to help reduce the risk of sunburn and skin cancer.

- Minimize exposure to the sun at midday – between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Apply sunscreen, with at least an SPF-15 or higher that protects against UVA and UVB rays, to all parts of the body that are exposed to the sun.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, even on cloudy days. Reapply after swimming or perspiring.
- Wear clothing that covers the body and shades the face. Hats should provide shade for both the face and back of the neck. Wearing sunglasses will reduce the amount of rays reaching the eye by filtering as much as 80 percent of the rays and protecting the lids of our eyes as well as the lens.
- Avoid exposure to UV radiation from tanning beds.
- Protect children. Keep them from excessive sun exposure when the sun is strongest and apply sunscreen liberally and frequently to children 6 months of age and older.

Most skin cancer is attributed to sun exposure at an early age so the best way to prevent it is by minimizing your risk.

Be sun smart!

HELPING HANDS

From Small to Walking Tall It Takes a Community of Helping Hands

When you talk to 18-year-old Kayla Smith today, you'll find she's a hopeful, spirited young woman with a mature-beyond-her-years sense of wisdom. She speaks with all the confidence of a person who has faced adult-sized health troubles from an early age. Clearly, Kayla is a strong individual who takes nothing for granted.

But seven years ago, when Kayla first learned she had leukemia, you would have found a scared, disbelieving 11-year-old kid. There's no doubt that such a shocking diagnosis would test the courage of most adults, let alone a girl not old enough to watch a PG-13 movie. But for Kayla, the disheartening news marked a major turning point in her young life.

"Looking back, I'd go through it again if I had to," said Kayla. "I grew from the experience, definitely. I grew up from it."

While Kayla may seem like an amazing inspiration now, it turns out she's actually an old hand at the inspiration game. In fact, she's inspired our entire community.

In 2002, the young Berlin resident was the catalyst behind CHN's first **Helping Hands for Cancer 5K Run/Walk**. Founded by community members Traci Hegner (whose son was a classmate of Kayla's) and

Cathy Hargrave, the 5K was originally organized as a way to raise money for expenses related to Kayla's treatment. Presented in conjunction with the **CHN Healthy Living Fair**, it has steadily grown into a communitywide event that has generated interest from around the state and, more importantly, has helped benefit CHN's **Caring for Kids Fund**.

But in the beginning, the event was a simple act of kindness intended to help a little girl pull through.

"I made it a long way with a lot of help from the community," said Smith, who will coincidentally celebrate in May her fifth anniversary of her final cancer treatment, an important milestone for any cancer patient. "Helping Hands for Cancer was one of the things that helped me get through it."

The event also served as a rallying point... both for Smith and the community.



"Helping Hands for Cancer" was started in 2002, when Kayla (shown in the photo above) was an 11-year old girl in the 6th grade battling leukemia. Today, Kayla is a senior at Berlin High School and looking forward to going to college and pursuing a degree in the healthcare field. May 13, 2008 marks a huge milestone – as Kayla will celebrate "5-Years Cancer Free!"



"It was amazing, just to know that the community was behind me," said Smith. "We didn't know word would get out so fast, and all of a sudden we got phone

FOR CANCER

"I made it a long way with a lot of help from the community. Helping Hands for Cancer was one of the things that helped me get through."

Kayla Smith

calls from people wanting to help. It just gave me inspiration to say I can do it, knowing there are people behind me wanting me to push through further."

Hegner remembers the months following Kayla's diagnosis as well, and how it ultimately brought the community together to help.

"At the time it was very scary for her and her family, and I asked her mom what I could do to help, and she said the hospital had this foundation that was helping with some of the financial problems they were dealing with," said Hegner. "I went to Cathy and said, wouldn't this be a great idea to do something locally in town, and they could actually raise money and have the money spent on kids who are sick in this community?"

Hegner says she's happy to see the event's growth over the years and is grateful for the good it's done.

"I get satisfaction knowing that I've done something for the kids locally, and the people that are benefiting from it, whether it's a little girl in Montello or it's a family in Wautoma that needs help. I feel good knowing I've given back to the community," said Hegner. "But it's not about me, it's about doing something I think the community needs, and the awareness needs to be out there about what the hospital provides."

For Smith, knowing that the **Helping Hands for Cancer 5K** originally was about her is something for which she remains grateful. As in past years, she plans to attend the event, and has also given back to the community, occasionally serving as an inspiration and resource for others facing a cancer diagnosis. It's an outpouring of gratitude that no doubt comes from feeling an entire community's support during her darkest hours.

"Overwhelmed, I guess, is the best way to say it, that they'd actually care," said Smith of her response to plans for the first **Helping Hands for Cancer 5K**. "When you're in the hospital it feels like the world keeps moving and for you it stops, and then to know the community is coming together to help you and give you support is uplifting. It helps you pull through."

7th Annual



**HELPING HANDS
FOR CANCER**
5K Run/Walk &
Healthy Living Fair

May 17, 2008

11:30 am

Berlin Memorial Hospital campus

Healthy Living Fair

10:00 - 2:00

5K Registration

10:00 - 11:15

Run/Walk

11:30

Lunch (available)

12:00

DJ & Entertainment

11:00 - 2:00

For more information visit
www.communityhealthnetwork.org
or call 920-361-5481



Where There's Smoke... Get the Facts on Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is by far the deadliest of all cancers in the U.S., claiming around 160,000 lives per year—more than cancers of the colon, breast and prostate combined. Although lung cancer death rates among men have dropped during the last two decades, the mortality rates for women have barely stabilized. Early detection is a key factor in promoting survival rates.

According to Dr. Peter Jerome, a pulmonologist, CHN now offers fiber-optic bronchoscopies and percutaneous lung needle biopsies under CT scan guidance. CHN is proud to offer these cutting-edge procedures and state-of-the-art diagnostic tools, which are typically found in much larger cities.

“I believe the services that we provide are very comparable with what’s been offered in the Fox Cities area, so we’re competitive with what they would do from an early diagnostic standpoint,” said Jerome. According to Jerome, studies

have shown that lung cancer can be in the body five or 10 years before it is diagnosed. Consequently, the disease is in an advanced growth phase.

One of the main predictors for lung cancer is how much a person smokes. The ACS reports that cigarette smoking causes a “sizeable majority” of lung cancer deaths. On the plus side, a 2003 study published in *Cancer Causes and Control* concluded that states with strong anti-tobacco programs were seeing positive early returns when it came to preventing lung cancer deaths.

“Where you have high tobacco control efforts you have low lung cancer death rates,” said Ahmedin Jemal, lead researcher for the study. “But what’s most interesting is that the death rates decreased in most states with strong tobacco control programs, but increased in states with low tobacco control efforts.”

Still, there appears to be a disparity between trends in men and women, with men’s lung cancer rates falling sharply and women’s plateauing or even increasing slightly.

“It may be that there’s a gender difference in terms of which individuals are smoking,” said Jerome. “We’re seeing some increase in the female cancer rate and that may rise for a bit, but I think a lot of these smoking cessation programs will probably have a positive influence, yet that may be 10 years away. Hopefully we’ll start to see a drop in the lung cancer risk over time.”



Peter Jerome, MD

Surviving Breast Cancer A Patient’s Insightful Journey

You might say Penny Bahn is a walking, talking, living example of the vital importance of regular breast exams. In July of 2007, the Berlin woman received some startling news shortly after her yearly mammogram revealed a potential abnormality. She met with Dr. Barry Rogers, Berlin Hospital’s chief of surgery, after her mammogram results were discovered, but was still unprepared for what she would hear.

“When the mammogram showed something wrong and I had set up the appointment to see Dr. Rogers, in my mind it was nothing because there was no family history, which was the wrong assumption,” said Bahn. Indeed, she was about to get the shock of her life.

“The first time he said, ‘I think you have cancer,’ it just blows you away,” said Bahn. “You’re just speechless. You don’t believe what you’re hearing.”

But while her eventual cancer diagnosis initially floored the 53-year-old mother and local receptionist/bookkeeper, it didn’t keep her down for long. By scheduling a regular breast exam, Bahn helped her doctor detect the cancer before it had a chance to really spread. This gave her every reason to believe the treatment would be a success.

“I think everyone freaked out more than I did at that point,” said Bahn. “I always had a very positive attitude about it, and I think I’m very fortunate because I didn’t have any lymph node involvement and I didn’t have to have chemo.”

Far from living a cautionary tale, then, Bahn has become something of a model patient, as well as a testament to the virtues

of early detection. Her radiation treatments ended in October and, with the help of regular checkups and a modest drug regimen, she is hopeful that her prognosis will continue to be positive.

“I’m just a firm believer that when you get to a certain age, you just do the things you’re supposed to do, because things just happen, so it’s very important,” said Bahn. “I go for my annual physical every year, and the screenings you’re supposed to get I think are just very important.”

The most common sign of breast cancer is a new lump or mass. Women should also watch for the following signs that may indicate a problem:

- Swelling of all or part of the breast
- Skin irritation or dimpling
- Breast pain
- Nipple pain or the nipple turning inward
- Redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- A nipple discharge other than breast milk
- A lump in the underarm area

Rogers advises patients to pay attention to any changes or warning signs, no matter how insignificant they may appear.

“They may feel a thickening or discomfort; or they’ll actually feel a lump in the breast and they’ll pass it off as nothing when they should really make an appointment with their family doctor to have it checked immediately,” said Rogers. “Any symptomatic change in the breast should be checked.”

As a general rule, women should start having mammograms when they reach the age of 40. There are, of course, exceptions to every rule. For example, while Bahn’s cancer was not related to family history, it remains one of the chief predictors.

“The biggest risk is familial risk,” said Rogers. “If they had a sister, an aunt or mother with breast cancer, they need to start their mammograms at age 35 or five years earlier than their first-degree relative developed breast cancer.”

“With the advances in treatment, we’re seeing a higher degree of success treating women in the early stages of breast cancer. We’re also able to identify markers that would signify the possibility of early occurrence, and those patients we can treat more aggressively,” said Rogers.

As for Bahn, who says she has “nothing but good things to say” about her experience with Berlin Hospital and Dr. Rogers, her upbeat attitude and current outlook seem to be a fitting reflection of her positive prognosis.

“It’s not the end of the world,” said Bahn. “Like I always tell my kids, there are worse things in life, and that’s sort of my motto.”

Need Someone to Lean On?

CHN Support Groups Help Patients and Caregivers

While the *physical* challenges a cancer diagnosis presents are obvious, the emotional burdens of treatment and recovery can weigh heavily on both patients and their families.

CHN is proud to sponsor two programs that help people deal with cancer... and the results have been remarkable.

The first program is the **CHN Cancer Support Group**, which meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at Berlin Memorial Hospital. Open to cancer patients and their loved ones, the group is designed to foster camaraderie and sharing among patients and their families.

“We believe that we have met a need in our community for people who have been diagnosed with cancer and are going through treatment,” said program administrator Kathy Beier. “We have volunteers who were diagnosed over eight years ago, yet they still come to share their experience with the group.”

Another CHN program (through the American Cancer Society) **Look Good... Feel Better** is offered to women dealing with cancer treatment.

Offered in cooperation with Berlin Beauty Salon, *Look Good... Feel Better* teams CHN with two local cosmetologists who conduct classes in spring and fall that focus on makeup techniques, skincare, nail care and beauty tips related to hair loss, including the use and styling of wigs. Individual sessions are also available by appointment. Trained by the ACS, the cosmetologists also distribute makeover kits donated by national cosmetics companies.

“Generally people are not quite sure what the program’s all about until they get there, and they’re a little afraid about coming because they’re not sure what it’s about,” said Beier. “But once they’ve participated in one of the programs, they appreciate it because it’s a fun thing. It gives them a chance to just

build some friendships and camaraderie and just relax and have a good time.”

For more information on these CHN programs, contact Kathy Beier at (920) 361-5507 or Kathy.Beier@chnwi.org.

Self-help materials for both women and men are also available through the American Cancer Society at (800) 395-LOOK. Further information can be found at www.LookGoodFeelBetter.org.

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