



SPECIAL COVERAGE BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

It takes a team to navigate cancer journey

Premier Health

After more than two years, Janet Holman can still rattle off the monumental dates of her breast cancer journey.

On Aug. 8, 2016, she noticed a large bump on her chest.

On Aug. 29, 2016, Thomas A. Heck, MD, performed an ultrasound-guided biopsy. Dr. Heck is the surgical director of the breast center at Miami Valley Hospital North and a certified physician with MD Anderson Cancer Network®, a program of MD Anderson Cancer Center.

On Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016, Holman waited for biopsy results.

Her phone rang just as she was putting her long hair in a ponytail before working out. The woman calling asked if it was a good time to talk.

"I was like, 'Oh, sure!'" Janet recalled exclaiming in her usual bubbly tone. She still believed the bump was only a benign tumor, and it would just have to be removed. "I sat down in the locker room, and she was like, 'Dr. Heck just got off the phone with the lab, and they did find breast cancer,'" she said.

Janet felt shocked. A few tears trickled from her eyes. She made an appointment to talk with Dr. Heck the next day and left the locker room to find her husband.

"It was like hearing someone else's story," she said. "And I don't know that it ever really seemed real. I never internalized it; I never let it own me; I never let it control me."

Janet continued with regular exercise throughout her chemotherapy treatments, which started on Sept. 15, 2016. She spent only one week extremely sick and believes that staying active, as well as drinking a lot of water, helped her endure the harsh treatments



Janet Holman was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer in 2016. "I don't know that it ever really seemed real. I never internalized it; I never let it own me; I never let it control me," she said. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

while still working full time.

"I just wanted my life to be as normal as it was before," she said. "If I was supposed to get up and go work out and then go to work, I wanted to get up and go work out and go to work until I just couldn't."

Janet said she "could never have asked for a better human being" than Dr. Heck to tell her that she had breast cancer. "I can't articulate how special that man is - just the tenderness behind the way he

treats you," she said.

Dr. Heck's office helped coordinate all of Janet's treatment at what is now the breast center at Miami Valley Hospital North.

"As the surgeon, I make the diagnosis, we start the initial treatment plan, then we are the ones who arrange consults," he explained. "The surgeon is usually involved upfront because in the majority of cases, surgery would come first. Because everyone is so individu-

alized, in Janet's particular case, data shows that it's best to treat with chemotherapy first."

Medical oncologist Shamim Z. Jilani, MD, designed Janet's five-month chemotherapy regimen. Dr. Jilani also is a certified physician with MD Anderson Cancer Network at Premier Health.

Janet was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer, which means there was no targeted treatment to prevent growth of the cancer cells, Dr. Jilani explained. The good news, though, is that chemotherapy treatments can work very well.

"Overall, the impression is that triple-negative is the worst kind of breast cancer," Dr. Jilani said. "So, as an oncologist, our job is to tell patients everything about the disease in a way that they can understand better and don't lose hope."

Janet's breast surgery with Dr. Heck in March 2017 turned up no remaining evidence of cancer - the chemotherapy had completely wiped it out.

"It was the work that Dr. Jilani did that caused that," Janet said. "I've never been able to articulate in words how to thank people who saved my life. That's what they did for me. They honestly saved my life. Without them, I wouldn't be here."

Janet uses the ingredients of a cake to describe her care team. Dr. Jilani was the flour - a very important piece, the backbone of the cake. Dr. Heck was the sugar - because he's sweet; but also the eggs - because they bind everything together. And her plastic surgeon, Jason T. Hedrick, MD, was the icing, "because he's also super sweet, but then he's what makes everything look good."

Dr. Hedrick began Janet's reconstruction journey the same day as her double mastectomy surgery.

She had a full hysterectomy performed that day as well.

Janet asked many questions, Dr. Hedrick recalled, which meant that they had longer, more in-depth conversations about her care.

"One thing that has shifted in medicine is that one part of my job is to just inform patients, and then once we get them informed, we can have a discussion and make some decisions," he said. "Versus processing the information non-verbally and saying, 'This is what you need.'"

The entire journey completely changed how Janet looks at people, she said. Not only because of her great medical team, but because of the tremendous support she received from all aspects of her life - her work, her children's school, their church, family and friends - especially through prayer.

Through faith and prayer, she had hope.

"I feel that everything that got orchestrated for me was through the power of prayer," she said. "My entire medical team and the success that I had was really, honestly through the power of prayer."

Janet is such a positive person that her eyes light up when she talks about her cancer journey and all of the support she had along the way. "I would want anybody who's going through that to look at the opportunity of the good in the situation," she said.

Now, the day she learned that her cancer was gone - March 27, 2017 - is one of the most exciting days of her life.

"It was one of the happiest days of my life, outside of being married and having my children," she said.

To learn more about cancer care and Premier Health's affiliation with MD Anderson Cancer Network, visit premierhealth.com/Cancer.

HEALTH

Fall into better sleep with time change

Local doctor recommends adjusting your schedule.

Kettering Health Network

It's time to "fall back." Daylight-saving time comes to an end this Sunday, and we need to set our clocks back an hour. Though we don't think this time change is as bad as when we turn our clocks ahead one hour in the spring, it still interrupts our circadian rhythms, or our internal clock, that follows a daily cycle of sleep and wake times.

Kevin Carter, DO, sleep medicine specialist at Kettering Health Network, recommends adjusting your sleep schedule to accommodate the time change this Sunday.

"The best way to deal with any circadian rhythm interruption is to start moving your sleep schedule prior to the event," Dr. Carter suggests. "For a one-hour time

change, start moving your bedtime by 15 minutes starting four days before." Easing into the change in time will feel more natural to your body than the stark change of an hour.

Effects on the body

Lack of sleep, or frequently interrupted sleep, contributes to lack of focus, increased mood disorders such as depression and anxiety, and short-term memory loss. Dr. Carter says time changes also contribute to a higher number of vehicle collisions and cardiovascular distress. Make sure you're taking care of your body and getting adequate rest to stay safe and healthy.

Start sleeping better

If you struggle with the smaller steps toward an earlier snooze, Dr. Carter offers these tips for a healthier sleep:

- Avoid or limit caffeine, alcohol and nicotine.

- Avoid large meals before bedtime, and don't eat anything too spicy or fatty. If you're accustomed to a before-bed snack, Dr. Carter suggests choosing a small carbohydrate with a bit of protein, such as a banana with peanut butter.

- Exercising during the day, at the same time every day, will help drive you into sleep faster at night.

- Limit your daytime napping to 15-20 minutes. Dr. Carter says this will help "take the edge off" of mid-day sleepiness, but you will avoid sleeping too deeply, which would lead to disruptions in the ability to fall asleep at night.

- Dim the lights as you approach bedtime. Stay away from electronics and turn off all but the lights necessary for safety to communicate to your body that it's time to sleep. "As we expose ourselves to light during the day, we're suppressing melatonin (our natural sleep aid), which helps sig-




Making adjustments leading into the weekend's time change will help you make the transition and get restful sleep. CONTRIBUTED

nal to our circadian rhythm that it's time for bed," says Dr. Carter. If you're set in your ways of streaming your favorite TV show before bed, Dr. Carter suggests trying to sit further away from the television and turning on the "night mode" setting on smartphones and computers. If the noise from the TV is what's comforting for you, try

swapping sounds for relaxing music or white noise.

Kettering Health Network is a faith-based, not-for-profit healthcare system. The network has eight hospitals: Grandview, Kettering, Sycamore, Southview, Greene Memorial, Fort Hamilton, Kettering Behavioral Health and Soin.



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