



Enlighten

A Newsletter of the **NavigateCancer Foundation**

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Dear Friends,

During this season, we can get overwhelmed with everything that we have to do; decorating, shopping, baking, wrapping and cleaning... and then cleaning all over again.

Many of you are currently in treatment or have just finished treatment and are already exhausted. You don't want to be the reason that your family's holiday is soured. The last thing you want to do is to think about your cancer but how can you forget about it either? Or maybe the unthinkable has happened and you have lost a loved one this year and this is the first holiday without them.

I am here to tell you that this season, if nothing else, is all about hope. We specialize in hope at the NavigateCancer Foundation and my holiday wish for each of you is to receive this gift.

Ten Evidenced Based Ways to Receive NCF's Gift of Hope

- Grab hold of optimism. The complexities of the cancer cell are unfolding like never before and the treatment pipelines are over-flowing. There is nothing but hope.
- Get pain free by getting a better plan now. Pain breeds hopelessness.
- Stay well rested. Let your friends help. When you are rested and relaxed, hope is easier.
- Feed your soul. When you increase your faith, hope follows.
- Stay well-nourished and hydrated by treating yourself to quality food and drink.
- Keep it simple. The meaningful moments are always when it's about those little things.
- Cherish your treasured traditions or think about starting some new ones.
- Keep exercising. Hope follows endorphins.
- Remain with those who love and comfort you and who add value to your life.
- Be grateful and hope will come.

This season can be a wonderful time of family and friends or it can be a time that consumes you and takes you down the path of being overwhelmed, frustrated and negative. I hope you choose to receive our gift of hope.

I am so very grateful for the continued support of so many to help move our mission forward. We are surpassing our goals and have already taken care of over one thousand cancer patients this year alone! Your support ensures that every cancer patient gets the help that they need to get their best outcome and that no one is alone and no one goes without hope. By doing this, you give us hope in return.

Our warmest holiday wishes to you and your family,

Sharon Bigelow,
Executive Director

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Second Opinions: Getting It Right the First Time

Second opinions changed the treatment plan in 52% of breast cancer patients in one study¹. And in a recently released study of colon cancer patients, only 71% of patients were treated according to national guidelines². Other studies prove that there remains significant variation in the treatment of cancers. Getting an accurate diagnosis and the right treatment options in the beginning improves your outcomes and decreases your cost.

Families remain confused and reluctant to “upset the apple cart” by asking doctors about seeking out further opinion. There is no cookbook answer as to whether you should get a second opinion. This is one of many things that NCF is good at and will help you evaluate your specific situation and provide an assessment. However, here are some of the more common reasons to seek further consultation. If:

- you have been given no hope
- there is something “borderline” about your case
- you are an HMO member
- the doctor wants you to be in his/her clinical trial
- they don’t know where the cancer started
- you don’t feel comfortable with the options or lack of them
- you do not feel comfortable with the doctor or his/her ability to treat you
- you live in a rural area

The next problem is where to go and who to see for a second opinion. NCF will help you but here are a few basic rules:

- Seek out a world class expert. The expert needs to be independent of the first doctor you visited. Never go to another doctor within the same practice.
- Seek out a multi-disciplinary clinic that will provide you with doctors practicing different specialties that will have different perspectives. For instance, you could be seen by a surgeon, radiation oncologist and a medical oncologist all in one consultation.

Second opinions may not always be necessary. **WARNING:** cancer care is big business and some hospital systems are starting “second-opinion clinics” to provide a service but also to boost revenue. These clinics usually have big “up front” cash fees and some clinics assist with reimbursement but others do not.

DID YOU KNOW... the pathologist makes a subjective decision based on objective findings when determining what type of cancer you have. Several studies have proven that there is a discrepancy between the original diagnosis by a community or general pathologist and one rendered by a pathologist in an academic center who may specialize in a certain area³. The experience of the pathologist impacts the precision of the findings. In the overwhelming cases, the pathologist’s interpretation is correct but there may be some situations that require a second opinion. Talk with your doctor or work with your NCF Nurse Consultant to help you determine if your case is one that should be sent out for a second opinion.



Thank You!



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'Tis the Season: the Flu Season

The flu can be a very serious illness, especially for someone with cancer or who has recently completed treatment. "Cancer patients and survivors are more likely to end up in the hospital or even die from the flu" (ACS, 2012).

The flu is spread through invisible droplets that come from sneezes, coughs and even during normal conversation. Someone is typically contagious before they even know they have the virus and remains contagious for up to 7 days (children may be longer).

The best way to prevent the flu is to:

- ✓ Avoid those with symptoms of a cold or a respiratory illness. Stand at least 6 feet from those that are ill.
- ✓ Wash your hands well and often. Use soapy warm water and scrub. Have wipes or sanitizers handy when out.
- ✓ Do not touch your eyes and nose. Keep your hands away from your mouth.
- ✓ Get the flu shot each and every year.

The flu shot is recommended for cancer patients. Ask your doctor which flu shot you should receive.

The flu vaccine recipe is different each year, made especially to prevent the strains of flu that are prevalent. Therefore, getting the vaccination each year is important because last year's flu shot will not help you this year.

There are two types of vaccinations and cancer patients need to be careful about which they receive.

1. Nasal Spray- this is a squirt of fluid up the nose but this is a LIVE vaccine. Cancer patients or those on weakened immune systems or those on treatment with radiation or chemotherapy should **NOT** get this form of flu vaccination.
2. Shots- there are now 3 types of flu vaccinations that are given by injection.
 - Traditional – this is the inactivated virus that has been used for decades and is considered safe for the cancer/treatment/immune weakened population. This is given into the muscle of your upper arm.
 - New Intradermal shot- new for 2012 (You may have seen the cute little porcupine on TV advertising this.) The shot is given into the outer layer of the skin with a tiny needle instead of the deep muscle. It is as effective as the Traditional shot but can cause some tenderness, itching and redness around the injection site.
 - Hi-dose – given in the muscle and used for those over 65 years of age

So who should **NOT** get the flu shot?

- People with a severe allergy to chicken or eggs
- People with a previous allergic reaction to the vaccine.
- People with moderate or severe illness with fever.
- People with a history of Guillian-Barre Syndrome.
- Children under 6 months of age.



Give the gift of
HOPE

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or mail your donation to
5448 Apex Peakway, #328, Apex, NC 27502

Donations can be made in memory or in honor of a loved one. A card will be sent to those who you remember this season.

NCF is a non-profit, 501c 3 organization and donations made to the foundation are tax deductible.

For your health: make sure those around
you get the flu shot too!

References for Second Opinion Article

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www.navigatecancerfoundation.org

NCF Making a Difference

Jonathan McGinnis is a 32 year old from New Jersey who was diagnosed with testicular cancer and was informed he would need 4 months of chemotherapy. One of the drugs he was to receive has the risk of causing irreversible lung damage and since Jonathan was a smoker for a number of years prior to his cancer diagnosis, they were concerned about this and more. The McGinnis' received contradictory information from their oncologist and urologist and they were understandably overwhelmed. Our Nurse Consultant, Anna, began working with them and sent them evidenced based studies to read, reviewed NCCN Guidelines with them and answered their many questions. Anna assisted them with preparing a list of questions to ask their doctors in order to get much needed clarification on the recommended plan. Despite this, the contradictions persisted, so Anna recommended that they seek a second opinion from a national expert. This expert recommended only an active surveillance program and indicated that no chemotherapy was required. Jonathan and Shawnda elected to follow the conservative surveillance plan and are elated and confident with their choice. Because of NCF's assistance, they chose a path that saved Jonathan chemo side effects, costly medical bills, lost work days and most importantly potential harm to his lungs due to needless chemotherapy.

Great job to Jonathan McGinnis for becoming an expert patient!

