

Education, Innovation Key in Fight Against Breast Cancer

When found early, breast cancer is highly treatable, and mammography (in combination with monthly self-exams) is the key to early detection.

“More women—and especially younger women—are educating themselves about breast cancer and are screening proactively,” says Dr. Julie Barone, Medical Director of the Physicians Breast Health and Comprehensive Breast Care Center at Good Samaritan Medical Center (GSMC). “The openness with which women speak about breast cancer as compared to 30 years ago is one reason; advances and innovations in diagnosis and treatment are another. There’s less to fear than ever before.”

DIAGNOSIS

The subject of breast density has gained significant attention in recent years as dense breast tissue makes it more difficult to evaluate mammograms and is associated with an increased risk of cancer. Now, a new law requires mammography centers to test for and inform patients of their breast density levels. It also requires screening options to be personalized for each patient to detect the disease earlier.

“The best screening option for women with dense breast tissue is 3-D mammography—or digital tomosynthesis. It’s almost routine now and has changed how we manage breast lumps,” Barone says. “With 3-D mammography, we can run fewer but more accurate tests.”

According to Barone, should additional testing be required, breast MRIs and ultrasounds may be administered.

TREATMENT

GSMC is accredited by the Commission on Cancer (CoC) and National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) and offers surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and hormone therapy all under one roof. The center’s multidisciplinary approach is patient-centered and utilizes an individ-



Dr. Julie Barone

ualized care plan and the services of a nurse navigator.

Lymphedema services, as well as cancer rehabilitation exercises, are available to aid in the rapid recovery from surgery. Patients can take advantage of an abundance of support services including social services, stress reduction education, support groups, financial counseling, oncology nutrition services, spiritual care, genetic counseling, and palliative care services. In addition, GSMC advocates for the use of integrative therapies including acupuncture, yoga, healing touch, and massage therapy, also available on-site.

“The benefits are many and complementary to traditional treatments,” Barone explains. “Integrative therapies can help with post-surgery pain, radiation-related fatigue, and chemotherapy-induced nausea.”

High-risk patients may benefit from such therapies—as might those who have completed treatment—and through lifestyle modifications such as weight

loss, stress reduction, and increased physical fitness.

“I want breast cancer patients to be empowered and to participate actively in making decisions concerning their health and well-being,” says Barone. “The best weapon in the fight against breast cancer is education. We’re pleased to provide it.”



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IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE IS DIAGNOSED...

Dr. Barone recommends getting to an accredited breast health center as soon as possible.

“At GSMC, you will have a nurse navigator who will take as much time as needed to explain every step of your care plan with you. She can set up and coordinate appointments as well as provide emotional support. With her help, you’ll be able to concentrate on getting better without the addition of unneeded stress.”