



MetroHealth Cancer Center Offers Cutting-Edge Treatment to Women with Recurrent Cervical Cancer

MetroHealth Cancer Center is the only site in Ohio offering a phase II clinical trial evaluating a new form of immunotherapy for women with recurrent cervical cancer.

"With this trial, we're giving women with this malignancy the most cutting-edge treatment that we can possibly offer them," said **Kimberly Resnick, MD**, Division Director of Gynecology Oncology at MetroHealth. The study is evaluating the efficacy and safety of combining the immunotherapy pembrolizumab (Keytruda, Merck and Co. Inc.) with a new immunotherapy called cytotoxic T-lymphocyte-associated antigen-4, or CTLA-4 inhibitor.

Both of these medications help the body's immune system, specifically T-cells, to target and destroy cancer cells, explained Dr. Resnick. Without immunotherapy, cancer cells have the ability to outsmart the immune system

by disguising themselves and essentially becoming invisible. "The immune system's T-cells don't recognize cancer cells as malignant," said Dr. Resnick. "Instead, T-cells recognize cancer cells as just a normal part of the body and don't mount an attack."

In June 2018, the Food and Drug Administration approved pembrolizumab for patients with certain types of recurrent or metastatic cervical cancer with disease progression on or after completing chemotherapy. This approval was based on research showing that the drug helped increase survival in these patients.

"We really have made enormous headway in using immunotherapy for cervical cancer," said Dr. Resnick, adding that this drug category is relatively well-tolerated. While there currently isn't a cure for recurrent cervical cancer, she and her research team hope to make further inroads in

survival with the new clinical trial. The study is randomizing patients to receive pembrolizumab alone or pembrolizumab plus the CTLA-4 inhibitor. Researchers anticipate that the combined drug regimen will further boost the T-cell response to cancer, helping to extend lifespan.

"We enrolled our first patient at MetroHealth Cancer Center recently," said Dr. Resnick. Across the country, researchers are aiming to enroll a few hundred women.



CONTRIBUTOR
KIMBERLY RESNICK, MD
Director, Gynecologic Oncology

"We really have made enormous headway in using immunotherapy for cervical cancer."

CANCER CENTER UPDATES

Cancer Center Survivorship Third Annual Symposium

An event for cancer survivors and their families. Learn how to use arts, music, meditation and exercise to cope with cancer, both during and after treatment.

Lunch will be provided. Parking tickets will be validated.

This is a free event, but registration is required.

For more information and to register, visit metrohealth.org/cancer or call 216-778-8557.

Thursday, June 4, 2020
10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
MetroHealth Medical Center
Rammelkamp 170
2500 MetroHealth Drive
Cleveland, Ohio 44109

Save the Date

MetroHealth Cancer Center Symposium

Friday, September 11, 2020

More details for this event to come



Surviving Cancer and the New Normal

How exercise and nutrition are part of our cancer care



CONTRIBUTOR
BENJAMIN D. LI, MD, FACS
Cancer Center Director

As cancer survival rates have improved over the last several decades, MetroHealth Cancer Center has responded by developing exercise, nutrition and other programs to support patients' overall health during and after treatment.

While we know that the advancement in treatment has prolonged life, research also indicates that good nutrition and exercise can improve the quality of life during cancer treatment. Healthy eating and exercise as part of weight management can also contribute to reducing cancer recurrence and improving survival.

A cancer diagnosis, which is initially experienced as a crisis by most patients, can also evolve into an opportunity to begin living a new and healthier lifestyle, especially as individuals start to think about survivorship. Our oncologists, physiatrists, physical and occupational therapists, nutritionists and palliative medicine specialists work as a multidisciplinary team to help patients create individualized survivorship care plans that incorporate healthy eating and physical activity.

We are fortunate to have **Joanna M. Brell, MD** (hematologist/oncologist), **Mary Vargo, MD**, and **Jenny Dvorkin, MD** (physiatrists), **Michael Harrington, MD** (palliative care), **Patricia Tousel** (AMIGAS), **Linda Jackson** (Arts in Medicine), **Kris Austin** (The Gathering Place),

and **Sean Shacklett** (Komen), along with **Kerri Black, RD, LD** (nutritionist), to provide leadership and help tailor programs to meet our patients' needs.

One such program is our Cancer Center's Annual Survivorship Symposium. This program is designed for our cancer survivors. The purpose for the symposium is to link our cancer survivors with services that are available at MetroHealth, and in our community, to help them begin a healthier and a higher quality of life as survivors.

I hope that as many patients and their families as possible will attend this free conference, which in 2020, will be dedicated to "Arts, Music, Meditation and Exercise to Cope with Cancer: During and After Treatment." It will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2020.

The meeting will be devoted to opportunities to learn from our peers and experts on topics such as incorporating fitness and healthy cooking into daily living, community support programs, and working with health care providers to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

With these tools, we hope to empower each patient to take an active role in his or her wellness, which ultimately helps one to live a longer, healthier life.

Encouraging Exercise and Nutrition to Support Patient Health

While most patients understand that exercise and nutrition are good for their overall health, they may not know how important the two are for their cancer care. Consequently, our center offers an array of services encouraging patients to incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into their treatment regimens and survivorship programs.



Exercise

“Ever-increasing data suggest exercise can improve outcomes in people diagnosed with cancer,” said physiatrist **Mary Vargo, MD**. For example, the American College of Sports Medicine recently released a literature-based guidance concluding that:

- People with cancer should incorporate physical activity into their treatment regimens to help improve survival, with breast, colon and prostate cancers showing the strongest evidence, and the list of cancers with favorable data keeps getting longer as more research is done
- All patients can benefit from exercise during and after treatment to improve quality of life and physical function and to reduce fatigue, anxiety and depression



To help patients achieve at least 150 minutes of exercise weekly, our center offers personalized exercise plans, ready access to physiatrists, physical and occupational therapists, referrals to community

exercise programs, and online conditioning, yoga and dance videos. These videos can be found at metrohealth.org/cancer/keep-fit-at-home-videos.

Nutrition

Our providers also help patients with nutrition. “Cancer treatments can cause symptoms like early satiety, nausea and diarrhea, which interfere with patients’ desire to eat. They really need to focus on nutrition to stay physically strong,” said **Joanna M. Brell, MD**, hematologist/oncologist.

At our center, an oncologist and palliative care specialist collaborate to find the best medicines for managing symptoms interfering with food intake. Additionally, a nutritionist determines how much daily protein patients need. At times, supplements may be needed to meet these requirements.

Typically, Dr. Brell recommends an eating plan of whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean proteins. Patients should also avoid eating fried foods, which can lead to indigestion, nausea and vomiting. These symptoms can be uncomfortable and prevent ingestion of important oral cancer-related medications.

As individuals move from treatment to survivorship, they can focus on maintaining a healthy weight. “If you start gaining weight after therapy, you may be more likely to develop a new cancer, or your old cancer may recur,” said Dr. Brell. “Exercising to maintain weight and nutrition go hand-in-hand.”



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MARY VARGO, MD
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Hematologist/Oncologist

Cancer Screening Guidelines

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), getting regular cancer screening tests is the most reliable way to find and treat cancer in its earliest stages. Age and average risk are the main determining factors for when screenings should begin. Here are the ACS screening guidelines for colon and breast cancer:

Colon Cancer Screening

Men and women have the option of stool-based tests or visual exams, such as a colonoscopy or CT colonography.

- **Age 45-75:** People should get screened.
- **Age 75-85:** The decision to be screened should be based on a person’s preferences, life expectancy, overall health and prior screening history.
- **85 and older:** People should no longer get screened.

Breast Cancer Screening

Mammograms (low-dose x-rays of the breast) can often find breast changes that could be cancer years before physical symptoms develop.

- **Age 40-44:** Women have the option to start screening with a mammogram every year.
- **Age 45-54:** Women should get mammograms every year.
- **Age 55 and older:** Women can switch to a mammogram every other year, or they can choose to continue yearly mammograms, as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live at least 10 more years.

These guidelines are for people at average risk for these cancers. Talk to your doctor to find out the right time for you to get screened.



Mobile 3D Mammogram Coach

Bringing lifesaving preventive breast cancer screenings to the community

In 15 minutes or less, patients can receive a state-of-the-art 3D mammography exam from a specialty-trained, registered mammography technologist at MetroHealth. All mammograms are interpreted by a MetroHealth board certified breast imaging radiologist.

The mobile coach provides the latest technology available called 3D breast imaging, also known as breast tomosynthesis. The mobile coach brings the same technology used at all MetroHealth Breast Imaging sites to convenient locations in your community, including Bedford, Brecksville, Cleveland, Cleveland Heights and Parma.

To schedule a screening mammogram with the Mobile 3D mammography coach, call **216-957-BRST (2778)** or book directly through your **MetroHealth MyChart** account.

On October 26th, the **BREAST/Amigas program**, in collaboration with Ventanilla de Salud (Window of Health), partnered with the MetroHealth mammogram coach to provide free breast cancer screening services in Lorain County. MetroHealth clinicians provided 51 clinical breast exams, while the mammogram coach screened 28 women at the event. All women who had a clinical breast exam and/or a mammogram will be taken through next steps of care by our BREAST/Amigas patient navigator and our Breast Center navigator.

Thank You, Donors

Dr. Li would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions to the MetroHealth Cancer Center:

- **Brett Altieri**, an avid supporter and advocate of the Cancer Center, who died of pancreatic cancer seven years ago. This year's Annual Brett Altieri Memorial Golf Outing, held on June 28, 2019, raised over \$15,500 for the patients of the Cancer Center. Over the eight years of the golf outing, nearly \$100,000 has been raised to benefit the center. The golf outing would not be possible without MetroHealth Foundation Board Member, **Jim Cahoon**, who has led, organized and managed the outing for the last eight years.
- **Ellena and Jim Muraco**, directors of the **OutRun Ovarian Cancer (OROC) 5K Run/Walk**, for their continued commitment to the Cancer Center. Over the past sixteen years, OROC has donated over \$265,000 to MetroHealth for cancer research and education. The 16th Annual OROC 5K Run/Walk, held on August 3, 2019, was a huge success, with more than seventy teams participating.
- **Arconic**, for their commitment and support to the Cancer Center community outreach program, BREAST/Amigas. Since 2013, Arconic has granted the BREAST/Amigas program \$170,000 to fund community breast screenings events, patient navigation and mammograms for underserved women in our community. In October 2019, the BREAST/ Amigas program received \$20,000 from Arconic to help support their program.