Health Matters

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So, What Comes After Cancer Treatment?

A Unique rehabilitation program helps patients regain their lives

It’s a Tuesday afternoon and the sound of Shania Twain’s “I Feel Like a Woman” is coming from a gym within the St. Jude Centers for Rehabilitation and Wellness. Inside, Jason Tse, occupational therapist, is helping Julia Cook Muneer master a new line dance.

But if you look beyond the music and laughter, you’ll see a highly effective, evidence-based therapy for improving balance and stamina as well as memory and concentration—areas often affected by chemotherapy and other cancer treatments. Welcome to one of the nation’s most innovative and successful cancer recovery programs. At most hospitals care ends with the last cancer treatment, but at St. Jude, something very different happens: a unique rehabilitation program offers patients the therapeutic and emotional support they need to recover their health and vibrancy.

“Some patients are able to simply step back into life, but others leave cancer treatment with serious side effects, wondering where they will find the energy to step out of bed, much less back into their lives,” explains Jean Dean, PT, who helps lead the widely-respected program. Although problems with fatigue, weakness, pain, insomnia, depression and incontinence are common among cancer survivors, programs designed to help are still rare—and outcomes like those being created at St. Jude are rarer still.

“We see significant improvements in physical and emotional well-being, as we address each side effect or symptom—whether it’s a swelling issue, loss of balance, pain, or anxiety,” explains Jason, who says the one-on-one therapies are customized to fit a patient’s specific needs and can benefit those still in treatment as well as those who celebrated the end of treatment years ago.

The comprehensive program features a multidisciplinary team of oncology rehabilitation experts who, together, offer the entire range of therapeutic interventions, from pelvic floor rehabilitation and stress management, to vocational rehabilitation and neurocognitive recovery.

Julia’s treatment for non-Hodgkin lymphoma left behind issues with fatigue, balance, and concentration—all of which have vastly improved through weekly therapy. “It’s made a tremendous difference,” says the 61-year-old buyer for a local school district. “The therapy focuses on my priorities, which on one day might mean improving my ability to focus at work, while on another, learning how to reduce stress and anxiety.”

According to Sue Potts, PT, Outpatient Therapy Manager, creating a nationally-recognized rehabilitation program is familiar territory for St. Jude physicians and staff. “In areas from stroke recovery to sports injuries, we exceed national benchmarks and create higher standards of care,” Sue says. “It’s exciting to bring that same expertise to cancer recovery.”

To learn more about the St. Jude Cancer Rehabilitation and Wellness Program, please visit stjudemedicalcenter.org/cancerrehab.
About one in five Americans will develop GERD, the medical name for acid reflux disease, in which acid from the stomach flows up into the esophagus, causing frequent, sometimes daily symptoms. While heartburn is common, it’s not always present. For some, the signs of GERD include a chronic cough, sore throat, hoarseness, wheezing (often mistaken for asthma), nausea or even chest pain—often prompting a trip to an emergency room.

If left untreated, acid reflux can scar or damage the esophagus—a condition called Barrett’s esophagus—which significantly increases the risk of esophageal cancer, explains Eugene Yoon, MD, St. Jude Heritage Medical Group and Medical Director, GI Services.

“Anyone with long-standing reflux should be screened for Barrett’s esophagus. While esophageal cancer remains statistically small, it is the fastest growing cancer in America and offers one of the lowest survival rates,” he says, explaining that just a decade ago, “watchful waiting” was the only option, followed by a complicated surgery to remove part of the esophagus. “Today, through a minimally invasive diagnostic technique, called double-balloon enteroscopy, is allowing—for the first time—the evaluation and treatment of symptoms originating from the small intestine. Thanks to donor-funded technology, St. Jude is also one of a handful of Southern California hospitals to routinely use endoscopic ultrasonography to more accurately stage cancers and identify disease in its earliest stage, as well as prevent therapeutic interventions—often eliminating the need for surgery. For GERD sufferers, St. Jude gastroenterologists are among the few to offer Transoral Incisionless Fundoplication (TIF), a successful endoscopic solution that is giving patients back symptom-free lives with little to no recovery time. “We bring together a level of expertise and state-of-the-art technology that is almost unheard of for a community hospital,” explains Dr. Yoon. “The exceptional outcomes routinely created here allow us to make a significant difference in our patients’ health and quality of life.”

To make an appointment with a St. Jude gastroenterologist, call (714) 446-5831, or to find a physician visit sjhmedicalcenter.org/gerd.

Already recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the nation’s high performing hospitals in gastroenterology and GI surgery, we just added a new honor. The St. Jude Center for Radiology and Health was named a national Center of Excellence by ASGE (American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy), the nation’s leading medical society of quality and safety in endoscopic diagnosis and treatment.

Two prestigious honors that make it easy to recognize where to find the highest quality care for you and your family.

After listening to Leonard Farber, MD, carefully outline the treatment options, the 59-year-old patient didn’t hesitate: he wanted his mid-stage prostate cancer gone quickly and with as little disruption as possible to his busy life. Instead of surgery or traditional radiotherapy—typically requiring 45 sessions over two months—the patient chose a breakthrough, high-dose radiation therapy called stereotactic body radiation therapy or SBRT.

“SBRT is emerging as an exciting treatment option that represents the next evolution in radiotherapy.” explains Dr. Farber, a board-certified radiation oncologist who left Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York to join the St. Jude Jordan Family Radiation Oncology Center. “Advances in technology are creating improvements in accuracy, allowing us to take advantage of the tumor’s biology and its responsiveness to more concentrated doses of radiation.”

For men facing prostate cancer treatment, St. Jude is now bringing the same advantages it has to other cancers; the convenience of SBRT therapy; the five treatment sessions, each taking only 5-7 minutes, all as an outpatient—no hospital stays, general anesthesia or wearing a catheter. Most importantly, studies show SBRT therapy offers the same five-year cancer control rates seen with conventional treatment options.

SBRT uses state-of-the-art image guidance and RapidArc technology to deliver higher radiotherapy doses with unprecedented accuracy. This translates into better cure rates and fewer side effects. The precision of image guidance allows the radiation to be shaped to fit and surround the prostate gland, sparing much of the surrounding tissues and organs from unnecessary exposure.

“While more long-term data is needed, it is very possible that SBRT could offer higher cure rates, especially for more advanced and high-risk cancers,” explains Dr. Farber.

Dr. Farber, who also offers expertise in SBRT for brain, spine, lung, and breast cancers, as well as high-dose brachytherapy for skin, breast and gynecological tumors, says SBRT is often so well-tolerated by patients it doesn’t disrupt daily activities. “I’ve had professional athletes go straight from therapy to training sessions,” he explains. “We never stop working toward achieving the best outcomes with the fewest side effects.”

To make an appointment or to learn more about SBRT, please call St. Jude Jordan Family Radiation Oncology Center at (714) 446-5632.
**What are the symptoms of prediabetes? Is it serious?**

For most people, there are no symptoms. About 86 million Americans—one-third of adults—have prediabetes, and most of them don’t even know it. Prediabetes means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. In other words, prediabetes means you are on the road to diabetes and all of its health-threatening complications, unless you take steps to prevent or reverse it.

- Talk to your doctor about your risk and ask for a blood glucose test, particularly if you are overweight and inactive, or have a family history of type 2 diabetes.
- Increase your physical activity and make smarter, more nutritious food choices. Start to include Mediterranean-style eating habits into your daily routine (more fish, healthy fats and vegetables, and less sugar and trans fats). This style of eating offers a long list of benefits for your heart, brain and overall health.

Losing even a small amount of weight and getting at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week can dramatically reduce your risk of diabetes. In addition to pushing blood sugar levels back into the normal range, exercise and weight loss can also help prevent stroke, heart disease, Alzheimer’s and other debilitating diseases.

**If you want to avoid osteoporosis, are Tums and other antacids to get a way extra calcium?**

No, antacids like Tums actually oppose the very stomach acid (hydrochloric acid) needed for calcium absorption. Calcium is one of the most important minerals in the body, not only for bone health but for nerve transmission, blood clotting, heart function, hormone function and metabolism.

While some can meet their daily needs through good nutrition, most people should add a calcium supplement to ensure their body’s need for this essential mineral is met. Calcium also requires a lot of digestive teamwork, including the presence of an alphabet of vitamins, magnesium, and other minerals. If there are deficiencies along the line—for instance, not enough vitamin D—it won’t matter how much calcium you get, your body will take it (and whatever other minerals it needs) from your bones. So, in addition to a calcium supplement, you may want to take a high-quality multivitamin.

The other essential step is exercise, whether walking or another weight-bearing activity. If possible, add strength training a couple times a week. People diagnosed with osteoporosis often mistakenly avoid exercise, which actually makes their bones more vulnerable. Bones strengthen with use, just like muscle, all through your life. And because bones are constantly regenerating, every positive step you take will make a big difference—at whatever age you take them.

**If there is anything new in the treatment of erectile dysfunction?**

Yes, there is. Over 50 percent of men in their 50s and 60s suffer from erectile dysfunction (ED) (formerly called impotence), negatively impacting their lives and relationships.

GAINSWave represents an exciting paradigm shift in our ability to cure ED and restore normal function, even for men who do not respond to other treatments.

Low intensity, high-frequency shock waves have been used to cure ED in Europe for more than a decade—a painless and successful treatment finally available here. GAINSWave, a noninvasive office treatment, has a greater than 75 percent success rate in more than 40 clinical studies. Shock waves “wake up” dormant stem cells and stimulate growth factors that allow the body to create new blood vessels and nerve tissue, reversing ED. While previous treatment options were about managing just the symptoms—medications, surgical implants, vacuum pumps, or penile injections—for the first time, this is an option that offers a real cure.

Blood flow is essential to normal erectile function. By repairing aged blood vessels, stimulating the growth of new blood vessels, and removing micro-plaque, the benefits from GAINSWave typically last years. The procedure is safe and effective, with no significant side effects or risks, restoring normal erectile function.
Beverly Dreher doesn’t need to be convinced of the importance of annual mammograms. A member of the Yorba Linda Country Club, she always participated in the club’s annual golf tournament dedicated to friends who have passed away from breast cancer. When the tournament’s organizer also passed away from the disease, Beverly and other members stepped up to continue the fundraising efforts.

Soon after, Beverly’s daughter, Kim, was diagnosed with breast cancer. The news was devastating, but she was impressed with Kim’s care team at St. Jude from day one. “Everyone was very helpful and action-oriented,” describes Beverly. “It really eased my fears.”

Kim—a mother of two, pediatrician and avid runner—received a personalized treatment plan, starting with a double mastectomy and breast reconstruction which was performed in a single operation. Following the procedure, Kim underwent chemotherapy and testing through St. Jude’s Cancer Genetics Program. That’s when Kim learned she has a gene that increases her risk of breast cancer, news that was difficult to hear, but nonetheless provided valuable insight into her health. Upon celebrating four years of survivorship, Kim feels blessed her cancer was caught early and that St. Jude was there for her every step of the way.

For Beverly, it reinforced her conviction that early detection is crucial. She organized her club’s latest golf tournament to benefit St. Jude’s campaign to bring state-of-the-art 3D mammography to its breast center. The technology is shown to improve detection rates by up to 41%, catching cancers when they are small and easier to treat. For the 50,000 women who receive mammograms each year at St. Jude, access to 3D mammography could be life-saving. The community’s investment is imperative in bringing 3D mammography to St. Jude. That’s why philanthropic efforts like Beverly’s and the members of Yorba Linda Country Club are invaluable. Through their tournament, which raised $16,000, they have joined with hundreds of other community supporters who have contributed a total of $2.4 million toward the $4.1 million project goal to date.

“Get involved,” urges Beverly. “Doing a fundraiser, big or small, is extremely rewarding. It’s an opportunity to share the importance of breast cancer awareness and honoring those we cherish, will have contributed a total of $2.4 million toward the $4.1 million project goal to date.

It’s Your Money! And It’s Your Estate! Workshops Weekly in September and October

Fullerton Community Center and Brea Senior Center

Get the tools and insights you need to get your affairs in order. Learn how the new tax law might apply to someone in your situation. Admission is free; please register in advance.

Light Up a Life: Celebration of Love and Remembrance November 11, 2018

St. Jude Medical Center Chapel

A candlelit ceremony, remembering loved ones who are no longer with us and honoring those we cherish, will support palliative care at St. Jude.

To sponsor, attend or donate to any of these events, contact St. Jude Memorial Foundation at (714) 992-3033 or SJMF@stjoe.org.

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St. Jude Memorial Foundation
Loss of mobility, hobbies, and health—a story that’s familiar to anyone caring for too many pounds. It was Mike Eakle’s story as well, until he retrived it using an innovative weight loss program.

Weighing 373 pounds and taking five insulin shots a day to control his diabetes, Mike couldn’t manage more than 2 feet, suffered from severe neuropathy in his hands and feet, and was dependent on an electric cart to make it through the grocery store.

Mike’s physician recommended the HMR Program, ranked the #1 Fast Weight Loss Diet by U.S. News & World Report. In 11 weeks, he has lost 89 pounds—and the insulin shots and high blood pressure medications are a thing of the past. “I have so much more energy, my sleep is better, and I can finally enjoy the things I love.”

Proven to create substantially more weight loss than standard diets, HMR provides every element needed for success: nutritionally complete meals, vitamin supplements, meal planning and education, accountability, and if needed, medical supervision.

When Joey first became part of Mike Eakle’s life, he was a medical-assistance dog, trained to alert Mike whenever his blood sugar level began to drop. But after losing 90 pounds, Mike’s diabetes is gone and Joey transitioned to a different role, that of a faithful companion to his owner’s new life—a life now filled with optimism, confidence, and previously abandoned activities, like long walks, and the emphasis is on learning healthy strategies, not giving up. In fact, Mike recently ran the donut machine at a community carnival and didn’t even feel tempted. “I’ve got some more weight to lose, but the future is exciting and optimistic for the first time in years.”

To learn more about HMR or to enroll, please call (714) 446-5154.
Q: Should You Go to the Emergency Room or Urgent Care?

A: It’s Friday evening and your son hurt his ankle at soccer practice. Or it’s Saturday morning and you’ve got a sore throat and high fever. What should you do?

“Recognizing the differences between ‘emergency’ and ‘urgent’ care can be confusing, because both terms imply there is a medical need that needs to be addressed quickly,” says Eugene Kim, MD, Chief Medical Officer, St. Jude Medical Center. “However, there are distinct differences between them and the level of care provided.”

Urgent care centers offer greater convenience for sore throats, fevers, flu, ear infections, sprains, and more, often with less wait time. And unlike the higher co-pay required to visit an ER, the co-pay for urgent care is typically the same as a visit to your primary care physician.

“If your illness or injury is something you would normally see your doctor for, then an urgent care setting is probably more appropriate than the ER,” says Dr. Kim. ERs are the best place for treating severe and life-threatening conditions, providing the widest range of services for critical care, including diagnostic tests and access to specialists and procedures, which makes care more expensive. And you may have to wait to be treated because ERs prioritize patients according to the severity of their illness or injury.

“If you are having a medical emergency, there is no better place than St. Jude Medical Center’s Emergency Department, nationally-recognized for its success in treating severe and life-threatening conditions,” Dr. Kim explains. “But for less serious health issues, urgent care centers are a more convenient, less expensive choice.”

St. Jude Urgent Care
2251 N. Harbor Blvd.
(714) 449-6230
Open from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
7 days a week