

Health News From Cleveland County HealthCare System

# BREAST CANCER

*The CRMC Cancer Center care team is ready to help in the fight*

By PAULA VESS  
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**SHELBY** – Breast cancer. These are two words no woman wants to hear from her doctor.

In April 2009, those were the words Libby Hastings heard. “I felt that my world was falling apart,” she said. “We were definitely shocked.”

But thanks to her resolve, prayers and the team at Cleveland Regional Medical Center’s Blumenthal Cancer Center, Hastings is fighting cancer with a new lease on life.

“I recall so very many emotional times through this difficult journey,” said Hastings. “My hope is that my description of my early symptoms could possibly save someone’s life. Taking action as soon as possible is very important.”

Those early symptoms were irritation and redness, as well as an usual discharge from her left breast. The symptoms would seem to improve and even go away, but they always came back. After about a month of having the symptoms clear up only to reappear, Hastings went to see her doctor.

With the help of physicians, nurses and support staff in the cancer center, and her family and friends, Libby Hastings is one of the survivors. She has completed her chemotherapy treatments, finished a regimen of cancer drugs and has completed a series of breast reconstructive surgeries. Throughout her battle, her resolve to win has never wavered.

“I feel that I have been given another chance at life,” Hastings said. “I am now living my life with the faith that cancer is not a part of the rest of my life. I thank God and those in the health care system who were so



Photo by Paula Vess

*Libby Hastings kept a detailed journal during her treatments for breast cancer. She credits God and CRMC Cancer Center care team for her survival.*

magnificent through this journey with me.”

Breast cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in the United States according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). It is expected that more than 200,000 new cases will be diagnosed this year.

But, more women are surviving the diagnosis. “Survival of breast cancer has gone up because of mammography and early detection,” stated Forrest Thompson, MD, medical oncologist at Cleveland Regional Medical Center’s (CRMC) Blumenthal Cancer Center. ACS estimates that there are more than 2.5 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

Hastings received all of her treatments at CRMC’s cancer center. One of the first cancer centers in our region to be certified by the American

College of Surgeons, the center offers a multidisciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care.

The cancer care team at CRMC includes board-certified medical and radiation oncologists, oncology nurse practitioner, registered radiation therapists, certified oncology nurses, a breast health navigator and a social worker.

Hastings, who needed chemotherapy treatments after her mastectomy, had her first treatment in July 2009. “I feel so comfortable when I go for a treatment because of the wonderful staff,” she said.

Whether a patient needs chemotherapy, radiation therapy or both, the staff is there to help them. “Everything we do here is up to date with the national standards,” Dr. Thompson said. “Unless you need some

sort of specialized therapy, you can get it here. You don’t have to go anywhere else.”

Over the years, cancer drugs and treatments have become much more specific to the type of cancer. “With breast cancer it used to be that everyone got the same treatment,” said Nanci Stott, oncology nurse practitioner at CRMC. “Now it depends upon the genetics of the cancer. We can look at the genetics and decide if the person needs chemotherapy, and what type of chemotherapy they need.”

If a patient needs radiation therapy, the Radiation Oncology Department is located directly across the hall from Medical Oncology. “We can offer most anything that’s available across the country except for some areas of very specialized radiation,” said Helen Maddux, MD, radiation oncologist at

CRMC’s cancer center.

The center features state-of-the-art equipment to provide safe, effective radiation treatments. CRMC’s cancer center was the first in North Carolina to offer XOFT, a breast cancer treatment method that targets the area from which a cancerous tumor was removed. “We have a machine that uses a very miniaturized X-ray tube,” Dr. Maddux said. “We are able to give very focused X-rays just to the tumor cavity.”

In addition, the radiation oncology area offers standard radiation treatments, 3D conformal radiation and Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT), a highly focused radiation therapy. “Any cancer treatment is coordinated between surgery, medical oncology and radiation oncology. We have a good working group here to provide comprehensive care for our patients,” said Dr. Maddux.

That comprehensive care also includes the services of a breast health navigator and an oncology social worker. These staff members help patients understand treatment options and prescribed medications and answer questions. They will also help arrange transportation to treatment sessions, provide assistance obtaining medications and more.

For more information on the Blumenthal Cancer Center at Cleveland Regional Medical Center, visit [www.ClevelandCountyHealthCareSystem.org](http://www.ClevelandCountyHealthCareSystem.org).

Roxann Louella Cape, a newborn at Cleveland Regional Medical Center, models the garment each baby will receive this month at the hospital. The “onesies” are given to raise awareness of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).



## Baby garment comes with important message

October is National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month. While it’s important to promote infant safe sleep throughout the year, SIDS Awareness Month provides a unique opportunity to encourage community members to remember the safety measures they can take to reduce the risk of SIDS and other infant sleep related deaths.

“Early prenatal care, not smoking while pregnant and

a smoke-free environment all help reduce the risk of SIDS,” said Betsy Bryant, RNC, MSN with the Women’s and Children’s Services Department at Cleveland Regional Medical Center. “In addition, there are steps parents and caregivers can take after the baby is born that also reduce the risk of SIDS such as breastfeeding, use of firm bedding materials, and positioning the infant on his or her back when sleeping.”

Working together, Cleveland County HealthCare System and the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation (NCHSF) will present to each baby born at Cleveland Regional Medical Center during October a “onesie” baby garment with the safe sleep message “Stomach to Play, Back to Sleep, For Baby’s Safe Sleep.” The safest place for a baby to sleep is alone in a crib or bassinet close to a parent or caregiver.

7th annual **Pink Ribbon Tea**  
Saturday, Oct. 23: 10am to noon

T.R. Harris Conference Center at Cleveland Regional Medical Center

**Nelson Jenkins, MD,**  
a plastic surgeon, will be the guest speaker.

Please register by calling 980-487-3724. Seating is limited.



Cleveland County HealthCare System

