

Mature Health

A COMMUNITY WELLNESS PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

FALL 2008

Successful Teamwork of NorthShore Physicians Gives Patient the Best Outcome

NorthShore University HealthSystem (NorthShore) gynecologist and gynecologist/oncologist discover ovarian and endometrial cancer during surgery for Lonna Tagtmeier.

In May 2008, Lonna Tagtmeier came in for her regular gynecological visit with H. Jacob Saleh, M.D. While she had not experienced any abdominal pain, Dr. Saleh found that she had multiple cysts and an enlarged uterus. Such conditions do not necessarily require surgery. But Dr. Saleh

“Being able to work with a specialist like Dr. Hurteau was extremely beneficial for Lonna’s well-being. It’s a win-win situation for our patients.”

felt something was wrong, so he recommended that Tagtmeier have a hysterectomy.

“I trust Dr. Saleh. If he believed this was the right thing to do, I wanted to do it,” Tagtmeier said.

For his part, Dr. Saleh thought Tagtmeier could have fibroids and benign ovarian cysts, but there was

a chance she could have cancer. He asked NorthShore gynecologic oncologist Jean Hurteau, M.D., to be available if Dr. Saleh saw any evidence of cancer during surgery.

When Dr. Saleh was performing the hysterectomy, he became suspicious about ovarian cancer after removing Tagtmeier’s left ovary. He paged Dr. Hurteau to do the staging or removal of tissues of her uterus under a standard procedure of care to determine any malignancies.

During his staging, Dr. Hurteau confirmed ovarian cancer stage I and found a second endometrial cancer also in stage I. “Finding two early-stage cancers in one area is very rare,” said Dr. Saleh, Senior Attending Physician in Obstetrics/Gynecology at NorthShore. “Ovarian cancer especially is very deadly if found in a late stage. We were lucky to have found both cancers so early. Being able to work with a specialist like Dr. Hurteau was extremely beneficial for Lonna’s well-being. It’s a win-win situation for our patients.”

After surgery, Tagtmeier spent four days at Evanston Hospital recovering and then went home for several weeks of recuperation before returning to her job. “Dr. Saleh and Dr. Hurteau are great doctors. They kept me informed every step of the way and visited me at the Hospital,” Tagtmeier said. “I am very grateful that Dr. Saleh pursued his great instincts about my health being in jeopardy.”

Now Tagtmeier tells all her friends to be sure they get regular checkups with their gynecologists, other specialists and primary care physicians. “I was so lucky to be diagnosed early,” she said. “My doctors are my heroes.”

For more information about gynecology oncology physicians at NorthShore, call (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1125).❖

Patient Volunteers Give Patients a Special Kind of Care and Empathy

Victoria Jones, 59, of Glenview, spent a great deal of time at Glenbrook Hospital during her husband’s illness. After he passed away, she was looking to give the same care and compassion she had received from the NorthShore University HealthSystem (NorthShore) staff. In March 2007, Jones joined a new group of volunteers at Glenbrook Hospital, dedicated to providing comfort and companionship to patients and their families.

On her first day as a trained volunteer, Jones passed the room of a distraught elderly woman. Though the patient was incoherent, Jones was drawn to her. “Having

continued inside on page 3 >



Victoria Jones

Restless Leg Syndrome Treatment Relieves Suffering

By Jesse Taber, M.D., Neurologist and Attending Physician at NorthShore University HealthSystem



Dr. Taber is a NorthShore University HealthSystem (NorthShore) neurologist who has also personally battled Restless Leg Syndrome for 25 years.

Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) is a neurological disorder that causes strange sensations in the legs, feelings that are often described as tingly heat, discomfort or like ants crawling along the legs. The sensations can build in intensity causing an inescapable urge to move the legs, which generally alleviates the feelings, but only for a very brief (15–90 seconds) period before the symptoms resume.

Question: *What are the most serious effects of RLS?*

Answer: Generally, RLS is most active in the evening and when individuals are sitting still or lying down. That can make it very difficult to impossible for those who suffer with RLS to fall asleep. Patients can be extremely tired yet have profound difficulty falling asleep due to RLS. Obviously, chronic sleep deprivation can lead to a host of other problems.

About 85 percent of people who have RLS also have periodic limb movement disorder (PLMD), a condition marked by involuntary leg movements during sleep, often drawing the knees to the chest. PLMD can happen throughout the night with leg movements as frequent as every half a second to five seconds.

The combination of difficulty falling asleep with RLS and interrupted or fragmented sleep with PLMD is a double whammy for patients.

Q: *What causes RLS?*

A: RLS can be related to another underlying medical condition like chronic renal failure or diabetes. It can be the result of a vitamin B12 deficiency, underactive thyroid or low iron levels. Or, in some cases, it can be related to certain prescription drugs like anti-depressants. In some patients, the use of caffeine can also stimulate RLS.

For the majority of RLS cases, however, the cause is not known. RLS can come and go in patients, and the sensations can move from one area of the leg to another with seemingly no pattern.

Q: *Is there effective treatment available for RLS?*

A: Yes, absolutely. Once a physician has conducted blood tests to rule out other underlying causes for RLS and carefully considered the patient's medication and caffeine use, there are several FDA-approved drugs that provide relief for both RLS and PLMD symptoms.

The most commonly prescribed medications help to stimulate dopamine in the brain, and are taken every day an hour or two before going to bed. Some types of seizure medications are also prescribed with great success in relieving RLS.

It is important for individuals with RLS to see a physician and get treatment, so they can resume normal sleep patterns. Often, people will take an over-the-counter antihistamine or something they think will help them sleep. But it actually exacerbates the problem and activates the RLS even more.

For information about restless leg syndrome, contact neurology at (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1126). ♦



NorthShore Physical Therapists Help 81-Year-Old Patient Recover From a Fall

Edwin Rode stopped using a walker and got his life back on track after several weeks of rehabilitation with NorthShore University HealthSystem (NorthShore) physical therapists.

Edwin Rode was active and driving in spite of Parkinson's disease until he had a bad spill in his retirement community. To make matters worse, as Rode fell he fractured his jaw on the dining room's fireplace. After having his jaw rewired at NorthShore's Glenbrook Hospital, he spent three weeks recovering—mostly bedridden.

After being inactive for an extended period, Rode had to use a rolling walker and had difficulty getting out of a chair. His quality of life had significantly diminished.

To jumpstart Rode's recovery, his doctors changed his medications, so his blood pressure would not drop when he stood up. That began to restore his balance. But he had extra challenges from Parkinson's disease because it affects a patient's balance and mobility.

To begin his recovery, Rode spent four weeks of rehabilitation sessions with Mia Boelen, a physical therapist

at Glenbrook Hospital. His next step was to have sessions in his home. NorthShore physical therapist Pam Goldfein moved Rode forward on his recuperation by focusing on his balance and transfers—turning, stopping and starting.

"For five weeks, I helped Edwin get back to his level of activity and independence before the fall," said Goldfein, a physical therapist at NorthShore's Home and Hospice Services. "He had to become active again and has to keep working at it. Our standard advice to patients is 'you have to use it or lose it.'"

Goldfein set progressively tougher goals for Rode. He worked very hard to rebuild his strength, so he could cease using the rolling walker. "Through Pam's help, I am no longer using a walker," Rode said. "She is a good motivator, was very encouraging about my steady progress and gave me exercises to regain my strength."



Now to maintain his strength, Rode spends 30 minutes exercising each day. "I really appreciated having this kind of help from Mia and Pam," he said.

For information about NorthShore's Home and Hospice Services, call (847) 492-5700 (Ext 1127). ❖

Patient Volunteers *continued from page 1 >*

spent so much time at the hospital while my husband was ill, I know when people are calling out, they are frightened," she said.

Jones sat next to the bed, stroked the woman's hand and spoke to her softly. Amazingly, the patient not only calmed down but opened her eyes and smiled at Jones. "That was a powerful moment," Jones reflected. "I realized my time and care could make a difference in my life as well as theirs."

The program, now called the Patient Volunteers, has grown as dozens of other individuals have discovered the reward of making a hospital stay much easier for lonely patients and worried families.

Patient Volunteers perform a range of duties for several patients during a single shift—from making phone calls to reading aloud to lending an ear—and no task is too small. This dedicated group answers questions and communicates information about patients' moods and

personal situations to medical staff.

"Patient Volunteers have become an integral part of the patient care team here at Glenbrook Hospital," said Kathleen Snow, Vice President for Nursing at Glenbrook Hospital. "They serve as patient advocates and companions, and show concern for the patient's needs, often enhancing communications between other members of the healthcare team."

NorthShore is recruiting dedicated individuals for the Patient Volunteer team at Evanston, Glenbrook and Highland Park Hospitals, as well as other volunteer opportunities.

If you're interested in participating, please contact our volunteer managers: Linda Hickman, Evanston Hospital, at (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1128); Patricia Feldheim, Glenbrook Hospital, at (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1129); or Marj Mead, Highland Park Hospital, at (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1130). ❖

To find a NorthShore physician near
you: northshore.org/findadoctor
(847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1131)

Mature Health is published by
NorthShore University HealthSystem,
1301 Central Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

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Laughter Yoga Class

Are you looking for techniques to de-stress your everyday life? Or perhaps you'd like to enjoy the upcoming fun, but often stressful, holiday season? Come find out for yourself how Laughter Yoga is healthful and fun.

Laughter Yoga combines laughter exercise (where you learn how to laugh for no reason), pranayama (yogic breathing exercises) and laughter meditation. This is not hatha yoga in which you assume varied stretching positions. Finally, be inspired to adopt some new attitudes that will bring more laughter into your day-to-day life.

Medical journals have reported that laughter reduces markers of stress and increases endorphins. (Endorphins make you happy.) It can enable you to see your stressful problems from a different perspective, opening insight into new solutions. Laughter reduces the rate of cellular decay and has been linked to lower blood sugar levels after an individual with Type 2 diabetes eats a meal, which usually causes a rise in blood sugar.

Join us for this highly popular class at HCR Manor Care of Highland Park on Wednesday, Dec. 17, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. HCR Manor Care of Highland Park is located at 2773 Skokie Valley Road in Highland Park.

To reserve your spot, please call (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1132). This class is limited to 40 registrants.

