



# No Mere Bump in the Road



Stephanie Ryder relied on family support during a year of breast cancer treatment.



Thomas Strong, MD

At 51, Stephanie Ryder paints a picture of health. Tanned, trim, and radiating energy, it's hard to realize that she's battled breast cancer for the past year. Fortunately for Stephanie, it was found early.

"The nurse practitioner found it during my regular exam," Stephanie explained. "It was so small, I never did feel it. My husband never felt it, and my surgeon never felt it."

## The Path to a Diagnosis

A digital mammogram and ultrasound followed, and the results were mixed. "There was something on the mammogram, but nothing on the ultrasound. They called the radiologist and he couldn't find

anything, but he still suggested a biopsy."

Thomas Strong, MD, a surgeon on staff with Memorial's Breast Health Program, recommended a stereotactic needle biopsy to extract cells from the mass for examination.

"The stereotactic biopsy is one of several minimally invasive procedures for evaluating breast masses," Dr. Strong explained. "Surgery is rarely necessary for diagnosis."

When the call came from Dr. Strong, Stephanie expected him to say it was a fibroadenoma, a solid, noncancerous lump, which her mother, sister, and daughter had each had. It wasn't what she expected.

## Family Support for the Journey

"I called a family meeting, which is what we do," she said. Her husband had just left on a fishing trip, so she met with her mother and three children. "I told them that the biopsy

## Check Out the Latest Research on Mammograms



Ken Moss, MD

Pat yourself on the back if you've crossed your mammogram off your to-do list.

According to a recent study in the journal *Cancer*, women are being diagnosed with smaller breast tumors than in the past. Experts credit mammograms with finding these cancers earlier, when they are most treatable.

Another study, published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, reported that women whose breast cancer is found with a mammogram often live longer than women whose cancer was found another way.

"The American Cancer Society suggests yearly mammograms beginning at age 40. Women with a higher risk for breast cancer may need to start screening at a younger age or have mammograms more frequently," said Ken Moss, MD, a surgeon on staff with Memorial's Breast Health Program. "Women who have a personal or family history of breast cancer should ask their doctor when and how often they should be screened."

Like any test, mammograms have limitations. For example, they will not reveal every cancer. And some breast cancers detected by mammograms may still be hard to treat. But the potential benefits of regular mammograms can mean lives saved—maybe even yours.

came back malignant, but Dr. Strong thought it looked like it was in the early stages because of the size. He wouldn't know for sure until he got in there."

Numb, Stephanie relied on her family to ask questions when they met with Dr. Strong the day after his call. He encouraged Stephanie to have a lumpectomy and sentinel lymph node biopsy—the surgical removal of the tumor, a small portion of the surrounding tissue, and the first few lymph nodes from the armpit—rather than the more radical mastectomy, which would involve removing the entire breast.

"Dr. Strong was sensitive, but very direct. I thought this was going to be a bump in the road, but he told me to get ready: It was going to be a year out of my life."

Chemotherapy followed the lumpectomy, and radiation therapy followed chemotherapy. While Stephanie swears that everyone made it as smooth as they possibly could, it has indeed been a year out of her life.

"But there have been many more blessings than not throughout this journey," Stephanie explained. "And no hair? It's absolutely liberating."



## Still Waiting to Schedule Your Mammogram?

Wait no longer. Call the Breast Health Program at Memorial Hospital, (337) 494-4755. And call today.

## Memorial's Breast Health Program—Fulfilling Our Promise to You

There's that dreaded call: abnormality ... biopsy. Whether cautionary or conclusive, the words cause the same gut-wrenching fear. You want answers, and you want them sooner rather than later.

At Memorial Hospital's Breast Health Program, our dedicated team of surgeons, nurses, and health professionals understand your condition and treatment options, but they also recognize your fear, uncertainty, and need for quick answers.

By routinely offering the availability of biopsy results within 24 to 48 hours, the Breast Health Program puts your health—and your peace of mind—first.

In addition to offering the latest in traditional and digital mammography, the Breast Health Program incorporates an array of state-of-the-art diagnostic tools, including breast ultrasounds

### COMPREHENSIVE DIAGNOSTIC AND TREATMENT CAPABILITIES

- Digital Mammography
- Breast Ultrasound
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging
- Stereotactic Biopsy
- Ultrasound-Guided Needle Biopsy
- Sentinel Node Biopsy
- Lumpectomy
- Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Genetic Testing
- Support Services

and breast MRIs, to define the location of a mass.

If indicated, minimally invasive image-guided breast biopsy—a nonsurgical method of assessing a breast abnormality—as well as sentinel node biopsy—which uses cutting-edge, pinpoint accuracy to remove the first few lymph nodes into which a tumor drains—are available. Only in rare situations is surgery recommended for biopsy.

Our specialized breast surgery team provides surgical options based on your diagnosis, and Memorial's dedicated cancer treatment team provides chemotherapy and radiation using the latest techniques and under the medical direction of the leading cancer professionals in southwest Louisiana.

Personal attention, patient education, and a dedicated team of specialists ... Memorial's Breast Health Program has the answers to your questions.

Learn more. Call the Breast Health Program at (337) 494-4755. Or visit [www.lcmh.com](http://www.lcmh.com) and select "Breast Health" from the Find-It-Fast! menu.

# How Do I Quit Smoking?



According to the American Cancer Society, four of every five smokers say they want to quit—and nearly 1.3 million smokers do each year.

While most rely on good smoking-cessation programs, others are able to quit and stay off cigarettes for at least a year by using a four-step approach:

## Step One

- List your reasons to quit and review them several times a day.
- Wrap your cigarette pack with paper and rubber bands. Each time you smoke, write down the time of day, how you feel, and how important that cigarette is to you on a scale of 1 to 5.
- Rewrap the pack.

## Step Two

- Keep reading your list of reasons and add to it if you can.
- Don't carry matches, and keep your cigarettes out of easy reach.
- Each day, try to smoke fewer cigarettes, and try not to smoke the ones that aren't most important.

## Step Three

- Continue with Step Two. Set a target date to quit.
- Don't buy a new pack until you finish the one you're smoking.
- Try to stop for 48 hours at one time.

## Step Four

- Quit smoking completely. Throw out all cigarettes and matches. Hide lighters and ashtrays.
- Stay busy! Go to the movies, exercise, take long walks, go bike riding.
- Avoid situations and "triggers" you relate with smoking.
- Find healthy substitutes for smoking.

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Tools to help you quit are available at [www.lcmh.com](http://www.lcmh.com). Click on "Health Answers" in the "Patient Center" menu, then click on "Smoking Cessation" in the Wellness section.

## Upcoming Events

### Coping with Cancer

For those who are newly diagnosed or undergoing treatment, or who have completed treatment. For more information, call Memorial's Chaplain, Rev. David DeWitt, at (337) 802-1933. *Tuesdays, Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov. 18 Noon*

### Look Good...Feel Better<sup>®</sup>

A program to heighten women's spirits while they're undergoing chemotherapy or radiation. For details, call the American Cancer Society at (337) 433-5817. *Monday, Oct. 13 11 a.m.*

### Sisters Surviving Cancer

A program for all women ... those battling breast cancer and those who want to learn more about the disease. For information, call (337) 477-4508. *Tuesdays, Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov. 18 6 p.m.*

### Free Prostate Cancer Screenings

Men ages 40 and older should have an annual prostate cancer screening. African-American men or those with a family history of prostate cancer should begin screenings at age 35. To schedule, call (337) 494-2023. *LSU Health Services Center Family Practice Center Sept. 23 and 24, by appointment*