



CANCER ANSWERS

Lake Charles Memorial Hospital

EVERYTHING YOUR HEALTHCARE SHOULD BE

What Is Immunotherapy?



James Gaharan, MD

Immunotherapy is treatment that stimulates the immune system to fight harder or smarter.

"Immunotherapy

is sometimes used by itself to treat cancer, but it is most often used with or after other treatments to boost their effects," said Dr. James Gaharan, a hematologist/oncologist on staff at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital.

In the late 1800s, surgeon William Coley, MD, noted an infection after surgery helped some cancer patients. While he had some success by infecting patients with certain bacteria, his method was overshadowed by other treatments, like radiation therapy.

Research into how immunotherapy can be used to combat cancer has continued. "In the last few decades, immunotherapy has proven useful in treating several cancer types," said Dr. Gaharan. "But for now, its main role is making other forms of treatment better or offering patients another, often less toxic, treatment option."



Learn more about immunotherapy. Visit www.lcmh.com/cancer. For an appointment with Dr. Gaharan, call Hematology/Oncology Clinic of Lake Charles, (337) 494-6888.

Fighting Back from Bladder Cancer



Gloria Toten underwent successful immunotherapy to fight bladder cancer.

Gloria Toten's bout with kidney stones resulted in sudden, severe pain, blood-tinged urine, and a burning sensation as the stones traveled from her kidneys to her bladder.

When the symptoms returned several years later, the retired U.S. Postal Service carrier expected her doctor to recommend medication and extra fluids. "I just thought I had kidney stones for the second time," Gloria explained.

A cystoscopy, a procedure to view the inside of her urinary tract, showed that Gloria's bladder was inflamed, but there were no stones. Gloria got a prescription for an antibiotic—and a follow-up cystoscopy.

Once the inflammation subsided, Stacy McBroom, DO, a urologist on staff at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital, discovered two lesions, which proved to be cancer that affected the outermost tissue layer of Gloria's bladder.

While the exact cause of bladder cancer is unknown, smokers have more than twice the risk of developing bladder cancer than nonsmokers. Gloria had been a smoker for many years. Other factors that put the 68-year-old at risk—her age, race, and history of chronic bladder inflammation—weren't preventable.

"Our risk of developing bladder cancer increases as we age, and Caucasians have a much higher risk than other races," said Dr. McBroom.



Stacy McBroom, DO

"Then there are some patients who are born with a defect that leaves the bladder exposed to continual

infection. This increases the bladder's vulnerability to cellular abnormalities that can ultimately lead to cancer."

To help Gloria's body fight the cancer, Dr. McBroom introduced bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) directly into her bladder through a catheter—an approach called immunotherapy. "The use of BCG causes such an immune response in the bladder that the bladder cells affected by the cancer are killed, and the bladder is then covered with healthy cells," said Dr. McBroom.

It's been nearly a year since Gloria completed seven weekly BCG treatments. While she continues to undergo cystoscopies periodically, she remains cancer-free. "I know that having had it once, I'm at risk to get it again, but it's treatable," Gloria explained. "I feel great, and I'm doing fine." ■

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Want more information on bladder cancer? Visit www.lcmh.com/cancer. For an appointment with Dr. McBroom, please call Urology Associates at (337) 494-4656.

What Is Brachytherapy?



James Maze, MD

One option that your doctor may recommend for treating prostate cancer is brachytherapy (*brachy* is Greek

for “short”), which is the use of radiation implants to slow or control the growth of your tumor.

“Brachytherapy is a minimally invasive procedure,” said Dr. James Maze, a radiation oncologist on staff at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital. “The tiny radioactive implants give a high dose of radiation to the tumor while minimizing the exposure to the surrounding healthy tissue.”

Implanted directly into or near a tumor, brachytherapy is used for small, localized tumors or in combination with other treatments. Depending on the type of cancer, the implants may resemble seeds, ribbons, or wires and may stay in place for minutes, hours, days, or even permanently. But don’t despair: “The permanent implants are so small—about the size of a grain of rice—that you won’t be able to feel them,” Dr. Maze explained.

A common procedure for treating prostate cancer, cervical cancer, and cancers of the head and neck, brachytherapy can also be used for treating breast cancer, uterine cancer, lung cancer, esophageal cancer, and tongue cancer.



For more on brachytherapy, visit www.lcmh.com/cancer or call Memorial’s Cancer Center at (337) 494-2121.

Watchful Waiting



Reed Fontenot, MD

Since his mid-60s, William “Dick” Floyd watched as his PSA, or prostate-specific antigen, levels nudged slightly upward. PSA is a protein that is produced by cells in the prostate.

“Various factors can elevate the PSA, including benign conditions such as inflammation or an enlargement of the prostate,” explained Dr. Reed Fontenot, a urologist on staff at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital. “But it can indicate prostate cancer.”

Since it is also common for PSA levels to rise as men age, neither Dick nor his doctor were overly concerned. But when his levels spiked last fall, Dr. Fontenot suggested

further testing. The cause of Dick’s elevated PSA was cancer.

“It was almost too involved for me,” said Dick. “I basically had five options: have surgery, undergo radiation, take hormone therapy, have seeds implanted, or do nothing.”

Based on Dick’s age, general health, symptoms, and the stage of his cancer, Dr. Fontenot recommended a combination of radiation therapies. Radiation damages the genetic makeup of cancerous cells, preventing them from growing. They eventually die.

For five weeks, Dick underwent daily external beam radiation treatments (EBRT) at Memorial’s Cancer Center, followed by brachytherapy, a single, minimally invasive

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The Facts About Prostate Screening

Starting at age 50, men should discuss the advantages and limitations of prostate cancer screening with their doctors. African-Americans and men with family histories of prostate cancer should begin talking with their doctors at age 45. Whether you could benefit from screening will depend on your family history, age, personal preference, and other factors.

But in its early stages—when cancer is most treatable—prostate cancer often doesn’t cause any symptoms. If you decide to be screened, your doctor may recommend two tests each year:

- Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test: PSA is a substance made by the prostate. A higher than normal level of PSA in the blood means an increased chance that you have prostate cancer.
- Digital rectal exam (DRE): A doctor feels for cancer on the prostate. A hard or bumpy patch may be cancerous. Even if you have a normal PSA level, a DRE may be able to find cancer.



Free Prostate Screenings September 22 – 23

To schedule a free prostate screening conducted by the Memorial/Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) Family Practice Center, please call (337) 494-2023. Or visit www.PCAW.com for more information on prostate cancer.

Watchful Waiting *(Continued from page 2)*

procedure during which tiny radioactive seeds were permanently implanted into his prostate.

"The implanted seeds are so small that they aren't felt by the patient, but they irradiate the cancer from inside the gland," said Dr. Fontenot.

While Dick had to avoid pregnant women and infants for six weeks following brachytherapy, he and Barbara, his wife of 52 years, are pleased with the overall outcome. "Did I lose my hair? No. Did it change my sex life? No. Now those are the important questions," he exclaimed. ■



Find out more about radiation therapies. Visit www.lcmh.com/cancer. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Fontenot, call Urology Associates at (337) 494-4656.



Dick and Barbara Floyd are pleased with the outcome of his prostate cancer treatment.

Support Services

Coping with Cancer

For those who are newly diagnosed or undergoing treatment, or for those who have completed treatment. For more information, call Memorial's Chaplain, Rev. David Dewitt, at (337) 802-1933.

Tuesday: August 18, September 15, October 20; Noon

Sisters Surviving

For more information on this breast cancer support group, call (337) 477-4508.

Tuesday: August 18, September 15, October 20; 6 p.m.

Look Good...Feel Better

A free program that helps women look their best during cancer treatment. For more information, call the American Cancer Society at (337) 433-5817.

Monday: September 21, November 16; 5:30 p.m.

Camp Bluebird

Designed for cancer patients ages 18 and older, Camp Bluebird is held on Bundick Lake, about 50 miles north of Lake Charles. Surrounded by the beauty of nature, patients receive support in a creative, educational atmosphere. For information, call (337) 494-3289.

Thursday — Saturday, October 8 — 10

Emory Wallace Retreat Center, Bundick Lake

Mobile Miles


The Miles Perret "Mobile Miles" Cancer Services program offers cancer patients emotional and physical support services, medical supplies and equipment, nutritional supplements, wigs, prostheses, and other resources at no charge, regardless of age, financial circumstances, or type of cancer. No appointment needed. For details, call (337) 984-1920.

Tuesday: August 25, September 22, October 27; 10 a.m. — 2 p.m.

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Keeping Your Kidneys Cancer-Free



John Upshaw,
MD

“Nearly a third of kidney cancers diagnosed this year will be found by tests performed for other problems,” said

Dr. John Upshaw, a urologist on staff at

Lake Charles Memorial Hospital. That’s because kidney cancer does not have any symptoms.

“Discovered early, the five-year survival rate for kidney cancer is about 90 percent,” he explained. “But if the cancer spreads to other parts of the body, it can be much more difficult to treat.”

Most common in adults older than age 50, kidney cancer is twice as likely to occur in men as in women. But since anyone can be affected, patients should see their doctors if they experience these potential warning signs:

- Blood in the urine
- Unexplained weight loss
- Pain in the side or lower back that isn’t related to injury
- A lump or mass in the stomach or side
- Leg or ankle swelling
- Unexplained fever that doesn’t go away after a few weeks

What Do You Know About Cervical Cancer?



Matthew Scroggs, MD

Cervical cancer and the deaths it causes are preventable. Dr. Matthew Scroggs, an obstetrician/gynecologist on staff at Lake Charles Memorial

Hospital, answers your questions about cervical cancer and its possible prevention.

Q: Does a virus cause cervical cancer?

A: The cause of cervical cancer isn’t known, but certain factors have been identified as risks, including a group of viruses called human papillomaviruses (HPVs). Most forms of HPV cause no symptoms, while others cause harmless warts on hands and feet. But high-risk HPVs, passed during sex, may cause genital warts or unusual cell growth in the cervix. This unusual cell growth can later become cervical cancer.

Q: Does the HPV vaccine prevent infection?

A: Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for females between the ages of 9 and 26, the vaccine prevents infection from four high-risk forms of sexually transmitted HPV. Two of these

viruses cause seven out of 10 cases of cervical cancer. The other two cause nine out of 10 cases of genital warts.

Q: Can it prevent all cases of cervical cancer?

A: Three injections of the HPV vaccine offer protection against the two types of HPV that cause most cases of cervical cancer. But a woman may already have been infected. Or she may have caught a less common type of HPV. So, early vaccination must be backed up by regular Pap tests, screenings that let doctors find and treat early cervical changes that might otherwise turn into cancer.

Q: When should a woman have her first Pap test?

A: Women should have their first Pap test about three years after they become sexually active, but no later than age 21. And the Pap test should be repeated at least once every three years. ■



Learn more about cervical cancer by visiting

www.lcmh.com/cancer. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Scroggs, call (337) 480-5575.



For more on kidney cancer, visit www.lcmh.com/cancer. To make an appointment with Dr. Upshaw, call Urology Associates at (337) 494-4656.



A complete library of cancer information and resources is at your fingertips. Visit www.lcmh.com/cancer and click on “HealthAnswers.”