

# thrive

## STEPS OF HOPE

Raising more than money  
for cancer awareness



University of Michigan  
Comprehensive Cancer Center



# thrive

SPRING 2011 CONTENTS

**04**  
**BOUNTY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**  
 We talk with Zora Djuric, Ph.D., about her research examining the potential of the Mediterranean diet to prevent colon cancer.

**06**  
**STEPS OF HOPE**  
 It's time to start training for cancer awareness walks. We talk with patients about why they participate. Our experts offer advice for first-timers, too.

**09**  
**SURFING FOR ANSWERS**  
 We round up the top seven sites for online cancer information.

**12**  
**FIGHTING BACK FATIGUE**  
 Our dietitians offer dietary and exercise suggestions to help combat fatigue.

*On the cover: Phil Brabbs, a former Michigan football player, founded the Cancer Kicker Foundation to encourage people to raise money for multiple myeloma through walks and other activities.*

**14**  
**CARING FOR YOUR SPIRIT**  
 Deacon Wayne Charlton offers conversation and prayer to U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center patients.

**15**  
**RESEARCH ROUND-UP**  
 Learn about the latest in research at the U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center.



Published quarterly by the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center, 1500 E. Medical Center Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5944. If you do not wish to receive future issues of *Thrive*, please call Martha Towas at 734-936-0434.

Max S. Wicha, M.D., director  
 Marcy B. Waldinger, M.H.S.A., chief administrative officer  
 Karen Hammelef, M.S., director of Patient & Family Support Services  
 Nicole Fawcett, manager of cancer communications  
 Jennifer Day, editor  
 Enrique Cruz Jr., art director, GLC Custom Media  
 Photography by Riku + Anna  
 Heather Guenther, contributing writer

**Executive Officers of the University of Michigan Health System:** Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D., Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs; James O. Woolliscroft, M.D., Dean, U-M Medical School; Douglas Strong, Chief Executive Officer, U-M Hospitals and Health Centers; Kathleen Potempa, Dean, School of Nursing.

**The Regents of the University of Michigan:** Julia Donovan Darlow, Laurence B. Deitch, Denise Ilitch, Olivia P. Maynard, Andrea Fischer Newman, Andrew C. Richner, S. Martin Taylor, Katherine E. White, Mary Sue Coleman (ex officio).

The University of Michigan is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

© 2011 The Regents of the University of Michigan.

**For more information about the stories in *Thrive* or any other cancer-related information, please call the Cancer Answer Line at 800-865-1125.**

# A CAMPAIGN OF HOPE

Cancer survivor Charlie Lustman to perform at annual Cancer Survivors' Day

**Anything is possible with a little hope.** That's the message Charlie Lustman is delivering to audiences nationwide as part of his "Musical HOPE Campaign." One of the next stops on his campaign trail is the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center's annual Cancer Survivors' Day celebration on June 5.

The hundreds of cancer survivors, caregivers, health providers, family and friends expected to attend will hear the 45-year-old composer, performer and cancer survivor tell his story through a series of pop songs chronicling his cancer experience—from diagnosis and treatment through recovery.

Some songs give a lighthearted spin to otherwise scary cancer-related experiences. His album's title track, "Made Me Nuclear," was inspired by his CT scans.

"Music reaches even deeper than words allow," Lustman says. "If what I'm doing takes the edge off of scary experiences and people can see the light at the end of the tunnel from my experience, then I think, 'mission accomplished.'"

This year's event will be held from 1–3:30 p.m., Sunday, June 5, at Washtenaw Community College in the Morris Lawrence Building as part of National Cancer Survivors' Day. The event is free and open to cancer survivors as well as their families, friends and care providers.

The national event began in 1987 as a way to inspire cancer patients and to show that life after a cancer diagnosis is possible.

Lustman's performance is a perfect fit for both efforts.

In March 2006, Lustman was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a rare form of cancer, in his upper jaw bone. He lost three-quar-

*Charlie Lustman will perform inspirational songs at Survivors' Day on June 5.*



ters of his jaw to the disease.

"I'm still singing," Lustman says. "I have a prosthetic and now I sing better than I ever have before. My message truly is about overcoming life challenges."


As a 20-year cancer survivor, Shaun "Marty" Martin knows the difficulties facing current cancer patients. He says the Cancer Center's event is an opportunity to forget the bad and celebrate surviving.

Martin, a longtime member of the Survivors' Day planning committee, says a new theme and keynote speaker are selected each year, but one element never changes.

"The atmosphere is always very fun," Martin says. "This is a time to celebrate being a survivor. For the time that we have them at the event, we try to make it as fun and educational as possible."

Information tables will be set up and attendees can learn more about survivorship issues, caregiver support and other concerns. Various community agencies and U-M support services representatives will be available to answer questions.

For those who attend, the event offers a chance to connect with hundreds of others with similar experiences.

"When you see the number of survivors all there all celebrating, you realize no one is alone in this whole thing," Martin says. 



*To R.S.V.P. for Survivors' Day, please call Catricia Thomas at 734-998-7071 or return the postcard found at the center of this issue of Thrive.*

# Bounty of the

## U-M researcher examines diet's potential for preventing cancer



● Researchers have long noted that populations living along the Mediterranean Sea have lower risk of cancer, heart disease and stroke. The lower risk may be linked to the regional diet—one high in vegetables, whole grains, fruits, fish and olive oil. To better understand the potential benefits of a Mediterranean diet, Zora Djuric, Ph.D., a research professor of family medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School, has developed a study to examine the role of diet in preventing colon cancer. We talked with her to learn more about her research.

**Q: WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET THAT MAKES IT A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR PREVENTING COLON CANCER?**

**A:** The various components of the diet seem to be a preventative for cancer. For example, increased fish intake and increased intake of certain vegetables may have a beneficial effect. It's also the large variety of fruits and vegetables that are consumed in a Mediterranean diet. Different types of fruits and vegetables have different nutritional compounds, or phytochemicals, in them.



*Zora Djuric, Ph.D., is studying the Mediterranean diet and its potential for preventing cancer.*



# Mediterranean

**Q: IT SEEMS WE READ REGULARLY ABOUT NEW RESEARCH RELATED TO PHYTOCHEMICALS, SUCH AS OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS OR BETA CAROTENE, IN FOOD. WHICH ONES ARE IMPORTANT?**

**A:** We are continuing to discover new nutritional compounds in food and are learning more about how they work every day. The different classes of antioxidant micronutrients, such as carotenoids and flavonoids, that are being discovered in fruits and vegetables are really amazing. And we're finding the same thing with whole grains: It's not just the fiber but a whole range of phytochemicals that seem to be preventative. It's really like getting a vitamin pill that has a thousand different things in it. It's good to get all those compounds by eating a variety of foods.

**Q: HOW ARE YOU MEASURING THE EFFECTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET ON COLON CANCER PREVENTION?**

**A:** We recruited 120 people with an increased risk for colon cancer to participate in a study. We randomly assigned the study participants to one of two groups: for six months, one group would eat a Mediterranean diet, and the other group would follow the U.S.D.A.'s recommended Healthy People 2010 diet. Participants completed questionnaires about their eating habits and spoke regularly by phone with a dietitian. We also took blood samples and performed a flexible sigmoidoscopy to monitor biochemical changes in the colon that may be related to colon cancer risk. Our last patient completes the study in May, and we hope to have results to report within a year.

**Q: HOW DOES THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET DIFFER FROM THE HEALTHY PEOPLE 2010 DIET?**

**A:** The Healthy People 2010 diet calls for eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and whole grains. It moderates fat intake and limits saturated fat. The Mediterranean diet favors monounsaturated fats from olive oil, nuts and fatty plant-based foods, such as olives. It also requires whole grains; low-fat protein, such as poultry, fish and legumes; and seven to nine servings from two fruit categories and six vegetable categories to ensure variety.

**Q: HOW WELL HAVE STUDY PARTICIPANTS BEEN ABLE TO FOLLOW THE DIETS?**

**A:** We were pleased that people were able to do it. It sounds complicated—and it does take time to figure out how to eat everything—but that's why we offer dietary counseling to ensure that the eating plans are working. People seem to like the Mediterranean diet, maybe because of the higher fat intake. It's very palatable, and that's really important. You can dream up the best diet, but if no one wants to eat it, it's not going to prevent cancer.

**Q: DO YOU HAVE OTHER MEDITERRANEAN DIET STUDIES PLANNED?**

**A:** Yes, we're writing a grant now to study the diet's effect in breast cancer survivors. People with other types of cancer tend to lose weight, but not those with breast cancer—and we don't know why. An important goal of that study will be to look at preventing body fat gain. An earlier pilot study we conducted among women in 2007 seemed to indicate that this diet may be

helpful. The women who ate a Mediterranean diet decreased the amount of polyunsaturated fat they ate by 50 percent while increasing monounsaturated fats by the same amount. They also ate twice as many fruits and vegetables, doubling their blood levels of carotenoids.

**Q: SO THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET COULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR SURVIVORSHIP AS WELL AS PREVENTION?**

**A:** Absolutely. Unfortunately, research has shown that survivors tend to have more health problems than those who haven't had cancer. The Mediterranean diet seems to lower the risk for several diseases, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes. It can be difficult to change the way you eat, since a lot more is wrapped up in food than health: It's about customs and values and feeding ourselves emotionally. But hopefully people will find it worthwhile, particularly if it tastes good. **t**



The best way to benefit from the healthy compounds in fruits and vegetables is to eat a variety of them.



*Phil Brabbs channeled his passion by starting the Cancer Kicker Foundation to raise funds for multiple myeloma.*

Phil Brabbs is aiming for domination—which makes sense if you know him as a former University of Michigan football player. But if you meet Brabbs these days, you wouldn't necessarily think of "domination" as you chat with this exceedingly polite, laid-back family man. That is, until he tells you about multiple myeloma.

A day after his 28th birthday, Brabbs was diagnosed with multiple myeloma—an illness whose median age at diagnosis is 68. Now 30 and married with three young children, Brabbs is determined to find a cure for his disease. While still undergoing aggressive treatment, he started the Cancer Kicker Foundation to support multiple myeloma research at the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The organization taps into volunteers' creativity, providing fund-raising tools for volunteers who would like to raise awareness as well as dollars. One of the many events Cancer Kicker volunteers are participating in this year is the Dexter-Ann Arbor Run.

"The ultimate mission of the organization is to encourage people to dominate life," Brabbs says. "To live with passion and energy, and especially for those diagnosed with cancer, to look beyond it and live passionately. I'm living that out, and I'm encouraging everyone to do that as well."

With that in mind, we've put together the top three reasons our patients have chosen to direct their passion toward participating in cancer awareness walks. No matter which charity you choose to support, you're likely to gain.

# Steps of hope

Cancer awareness walks  
raise more than money

Visit [mCancer.org/thrive](http://mCancer.org/thrive) to link to area cancer awareness walks. Also, view more photos of other U-M patients' victories at past cancer awareness walks.

**STEP 1**

**WALK BECAUSE YOUR CAUSE IS IMPORTANT.**

Don't be shy about asking for donations. Asking for money may seem daunting, but people like to give to good causes—especially if you can convey how important that cause is to you.

When it became clear in 1998 that Emily Avers would need a blood stem-cell transplant to treat her non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, she turned to her only sibling, Laura Duda. Doctors told her that siblings only have a one in four chance of matching. Laura did. Ten years later, the sisters decided it was time to commemorate the procedure, which eradicated the cancer. Avers and Duda flew to Jamaica to walk a half-marathon for the Cancer Support Community (which at that time was known as The Wellness Community of Southeast Michigan).

"The walk was a celebration of getting to that point," Avers says. "We couldn't believe I was all of a sudden cured because no one wanted to say that word for a long time. But now that I had been cancer-free for so many years, I wanted to involve people in a cause that we both cared about. We wanted to support not only patients, but the kids and families of cancer survivors. It was easy to gather support for that."



*Sisters Emily Avers (right) and Laura Duda completed the Strides for Hope half-marathon for the Cancer Support Community.*

*The Darwin family was joined by many friends at the PurpleStride walk.*

**STEP 2**

**WALK TO REMEMBER.  
WALK FOR COMMUNITY.**

Brian Darwin was an active guy: His work required physical labor. He raised four young athletes. He knew his body so well that he told his wife, Brenda, that he felt like a softball was growing inside of him even before doctors diagnosed him with pancreatic cancer.

"I think the hardest thing on him during the whole experience was his body failing him," Brenda Darwin said. "He was used to being so active and doing so much. Now he was limited."

So when one of Brenda's daughters found out about the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network's annual PurpleStride walk at the Detroit Zoo, the Darwin family decided it would be the perfect way to honor Brian, who by then was receiving hospice care. The family gathered again last fall and plan to make it an annual event.

For Brenda, the sense of community she felt during the walk was overwhelming.

"I think it's important to get involved, even though you might be apprehensive at first," Brenda said. "There's a feeling of comfort that comes over you just by being around other people who know what it's like. You feel like you know these people, even if you don't. You're all going through the same thing."



STEP 3


WALK TO SHOW CANCER WHO'S BOSS.

Rachel McCormack can't help but notice the way her brain tumor has affected her body. Since undergoing surgery that removed 90 percent of the tumor, she hasn't been quite as steady as she used to be. Her eyesight suffers. But her legs are good, so she has set a lofty goal: to run the Chicago Marathon in October.

McCormack is a life-long runner, and this isn't the first time she's set her sights on a marathon. This time, though, it will be a little different. She will have her husband, Michael, right by her side to help guide her through the race as she runs to support the American Brain Tumor Association. Although McCormack is still receiving chemotherapy, she has begun training after consulting first with her neuro-oncologist, Larry Junck, M.D.

Junck encourages patients who can physically tolerate exercise to pursue it. Even light activity, such as walking around the house a couple times a day, helps maintain general health as well as bone and muscle strength while keeping up morale. In any case, the key is to gradually increase endurance.

As of February, McCormack was up to running about three miles.

"You can let cancer make your life come to a halt—and it is tough. But I think this is something I can do," McCormack says. "The tumor is still going to be there, but I'm going to feel like I've beaten it. I'm going to show it who's boss." 



“The tumor is still going to be there, but I’m going to feel like I’ve beaten it. I’m going to show it who’s boss.”

—Rachel McCormack

*Rachel McCormack lives with a brain tumor and plans to run the Chicago Marathon to raise money to fund research on her disease.*

WALK SMART

G. Lita Smith, an acute care nurse practitioner in the University of Michigan multidisciplinary Breast Care Center, knows from experience what it takes to participate in a cancer awareness walk. To honor her patients and her mother—who died 20 years ago of breast cancer—she has walked many times in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Smith has even completed the 60-mile Komen 3-Day for the Cure twice, both times accompanied by her mother-in-law.

We asked Smith for her tips on training for cancer awareness walks. Here's what she had to say:

TIPS

- 1. Talk to your doctor first.** Exercise is good for you, but any time you begin a new fitness regimen—whether it's to train for a cancer awareness walk or to improve your health—you should talk to your health care team first.
- 2. If you're still on treatment or have recently completed treatment, manage your expectations.** Even if you were very physically fit before treatment, you may find that you become more easily tired. Listen to your body. If you're feeling low on energy, consider exercising for shorter periods of time or every other day, rather than daily. However, don't assume exercise will make you more tired. Some studies have shown that exercise—particularly when done outdoors—may actually fight attentional and physical fatigue.
- 3. For first-time walkers, consider Relay for Life.** The American Cancer Society's annual Relay for Life starts each event with a lap for survivors. This is a relatively short walk that doesn't require serious training. You can also join a relay team, allowing you to manage how much you would like to walk throughout the event.
- 4. If you are in treatment or aren't up to walking, let your family and friends do it for you.** Cancer awareness walks can be a powerful way for family and friends to show their support for you. Consider cheering them on from the sidelines or helping them with the online fund-raising aspects of the event.



Laptops, iPods and iPads are a great way to pass the time in our waiting rooms or during infusion. Find out what patients picked as the best ways to spend time online. We also have more tips to help you evaluate the credibility of online cancer information.

# Surfing for answers

Our medical librarian selects best online cancer resources so you don't have to

**If you think you can trust the results of your latest Google search on cancer, click again. And again. And again.**

It's important to use trusted resources when it comes to your health or that of a loved one, but verifying a cancer website's credentials is a multistep—and often time-consuming—process.

“You want to make sure that the information you find on the Internet has the same level of credibility as your physician,” says Ruti Volk, M.S.I., A.H.I.P., the University of Michigan Health System's Patient Education librarian and former manager of the U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center's Patient Education Resource Center. “It's important to check a website's credentials, because if you base a decision on bad, inaccurate or outdated information, you can really cause yourself a lot of harm,” she says.

Volk, an award-winning medical librarian, shares her choices for the best online cancer resources so cancer patients, their family and friends can focus on what's important: time together.



### AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Visit: [cancer.org](http://cancer.org)

**Who runs it:** The American Cancer Society (ACS) is a nationwide, community-based organization that supports patients, survivors and caregivers throughout their cancer experience; funds cancer research; and works with lawmakers to promote beneficial policies, laws and regulations.

**What you'll find:** This website covers it all, from detailed summaries for specific types of cancer to extensive information on staying healthy and finding support. Browse the website to learn more about developing healthy habits, making cancer-related decisions and coping with treatment side effects. ACS packs in a lot of information, but section overviews make it easier to locate what you need. The organization also offers the Clinical Trials Matching Service, a free program to help cancer patients find clinical trials that may be right for them.

### AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY'S CANCER.NET

Visit: [cancer.net](http://cancer.net)

**Who runs it:** Cancer.net is the patient information website of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, a nonprofit organization of nearly 30,000 oncology practitioners that aims to improve cancer care and prevention.

**What you'll find:** All information is oncologist-approved, providing visitors with the latest research news, treatment guidelines and online discussions with oncologists. This website offers free audio podcasts and videos on various cancer-related topics, as well as in-depth guides on coping with cancer and survivorship. Cancer.net dedicates an entire section to those who have recently been diagnosed with cancer to help guide them through the process. The site suggests questions patients should ask providers and explains the oncology team's role in cancer care.

### THE CANCER JOURNEY

Visit: [thecancerjourney.org](http://thecancerjourney.org)

**Who runs it:** The Cancer Journey was created through the expertise and resources of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), the world's largest professional oncology association. ONS includes more than 37,000 registered nurses and other health care providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research and administration.

**What you'll find:** This website focuses on managing side effects and symptoms during and after cancer treatment. The Cancer Journey summarizes research on ways to better manage cancer-related symptoms. All information is reviewed by ONS experts. For those who need help making cancer treatment decisions, The Cancer Journey offers a free tool called the Cancer Profiler, which uses a questionnaire to match a patient's diagnosis, diagnostic results and disease stage with relevant treatment options. Another unique feature is "Traveling Companions," a blog written by oncology nurses and caregiver experts to provide support and advice to patients and their caregivers.

### NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

Visit: [cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov)

**Who runs it:** The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is part of the National Institutes of Health, one of 11 agencies

in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**What you'll find:** This website features the Physician Data Query, NCI's comprehensive cancer database. It contains peer-reviewed, evidence-based summaries on treatment of adult and childhood cancer types and supportive care topics. Oncology specialists update these statements monthly. The site also has a database of cancer clinical trials, which can be searched based on cancer type or condition, stage, trial status and more. A comprehensive cancer term dictionary helps translate confusing medical jargon into everyday language.

### NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CANCER NETWORK

Visit: [nccn.com](http://nccn.com)

**Who runs it:** The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) is a nonprofit alliance of 21 of the world's leading cancer centers—including the U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center—dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of care provided to patients with cancer.

**What you'll find:** Physicians worldwide use the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology—the most comprehensive and most frequently updated clinical practice guidelines—to make sure their treatment decisions are well informed. The NCCN currently offers guidelines for patients with breast cancer, non-small cell lung cancer, melanoma, multiple myeloma, prostate cancer and ovarian cancer (with more being added). This website also includes information for family, friends and caregivers of cancer patients, including a new column on caregiving from Jai Pausch, wife of Randy Pausch (*The Last Lecture*).

### CANCERCARE

Visit: [cancercare.org](http://cancercare.org)

**Who runs it:** CancerCare is a national nonprofit organization.

**What you'll find:** This organization provides free, professional support services for anyone affected by cancer. Services include free counseling sessions with an oncology social worker and various




opportunities to connect with support groups or participate in free educational workshops about cancer-related issues. CancerCare also offers specialized services for parents; women; young adults; and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

## CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY

Visit: [thewellnesscommunity.org](http://thewellnesscommunity.org)

**Who runs it:** Popular cancer support programs Gilda's Club and the Wellness Community recently merged to create The Cancer Support Community, an international nonprofit organization that is the largest employer of psychosocial oncology mental health professionals in the United States.

**What you'll find:** This organization offers support groups, lectures, workshops and social events for people affected by

cancer, including patients, family members and friends. The website allows users to get support and participate in programs online through a free registration process. The site covers a wide range of topics, from being newly diagnosed to survivorship and caring for cancer patients. A video journal option allows you to share your story with others. 



## CLICK BLUE, TOO!

The University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center has a variety of ways to connect with us online. Check out what we have to offer:

### mCancer.org

This is our front door. You'll find all the information you need to prepare for your visits as well as profiles of your care providers, general information about cancer types and the latest news in U-M cancer research.

### mCancerTalk.org

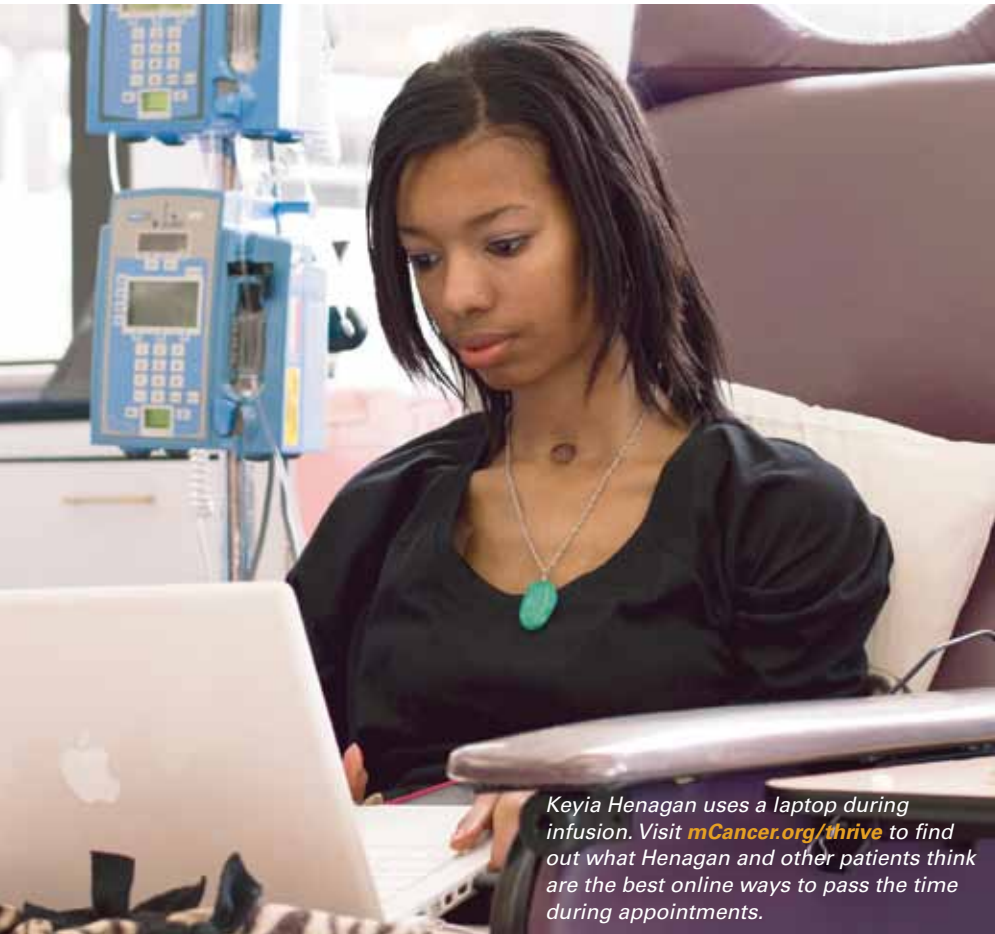
We've launched [mCancerTalk.org](http://mCancerTalk.org) to provide you with a new, interactive place to learn about better ways to live with cancer. Here you'll find links to more stories like the ones you find in *Thrive* as well as online chats with experts, including our Cancer AnswerLine oncology nurses, and patient and caregiver discussion groups.

### UMclinicalstudies.org

Would you like to know more about how you can advance cancer research? Find out how you can participate in a clinical research study at [UMclinicalstudies.org](http://UMclinicalstudies.org). Search our database of open trials and sign up for regular updates tailored just for you.



Let the PERC help you research your cancer. Visit the center on Level B-1 or call 734-647-8626 to request assistance or to borrow a laptop or iPod during your next visit.



Keyvia Henagan uses a laptop during infusion. Visit [mCancer.org/thrive](http://mCancer.org/thrive) to find out what Henagan and other patients think are the best online ways to pass the time during appointments.

# A HEALTHY BOOST

## Fight fatigue with food and exercise

You wake up to the alarm blaring and cover your head with your pillow wondering how it could possibly be time to get up already.

Next, you are making yourself a light breakfast before you have to head out the door for your appointment and find you have to sit down to rest from the effort. If this scenario sounds familiar, you are not alone. Up to 96 percent of people treated for cancer report fatigue. How you eat, drink and spend your day can reduce your fatigue and may even boost your energy levels.

### EATING FOR ENERGY

You may feel like you are fighting a losing battle with fatigue. The fatigue itself can hinder eating enough calories and protein to maintain energy by limiting your ability and desire to prepare healthy meals and snacks. This in turn will limit the amount you eat, which can result in more fatigue. If you are losing weight, it is important to eat more frequently to avoid losing muscle mass, which can lead to difficulty with daily activities. If you are not losing weight, it is important not to overeat for energy, as extra weight can worsen extreme tiredness. Choosing the right foods is key. Limit empty-calorie foods such as candy, soda pop, baked goods and other desserts. They may give you a quick energy boost initially but often will leave you feeling more drained once their effect wears off. Foods containing protein, healthy fats and fiber will give you more long-term energy, in addition to having more vitamins and minerals to support your body's needs. *(For helpful tips for adding more healthy foods into your diet when you are running low on energy, see the tips section.)*

Peanut butter and nuts are packed with protein to give you more energy.



Cancer Center dietitians Nancy Burke, R.D., Danielle Karsies, R.D., M.S., and Joan Daniels, R.D., offer tips for fighting fatigue.



Staying hydrated can help ward off fatigue.



### DRINK UP

Dehydration can make you feel drained. Make sure you drink at least eight to 12 cups of fluid daily to help you meet your hydration needs. Focus on drinking water if you have maintained your weight, or use calorie-dense items like 100 percent fruit juice, milk or sports drinks if you have been losing weight. Keeping a visual record of your fluid intake can be helpful so you keep on track. At the beginning of each day, fill a 2-liter (64 fluid ounces) container with tap water. Each time you drink any type of fluid or liquid-containing food (soup broth, ice cream, Jell-O), pour out that amount of liquid from the 2-liter container so that you have a running tally of your fluid intake for the day.



Exercise may boost—  
rather than drain—  
your energy.



### EXERCISE FOR ENERGY

You may have become more sedentary since beginning treatment, thinking that exercise will only sap the little energy you have left, but you could be wrong. There is a convincing link between physical activity and lower risk of colon cancer, and a possible link to lower rates of postmenopausal breast and endometrial cancer. Some studies have suggested that cancer patients who engage in moderate physical activity for at least three to five hours per week may experience better outcomes and fewer side effects of treatment, including fatigue. Additionally, light to moderate physical activity has been shown to improve mood, maintain strength, boost your immune system and support quality sleep. Don't be discouraged if you feel you can't muster enough energy for more than a leisurely stroll. A study at the University of Georgia found that the group who took part in low-intensity exercise had a greater reduction in their fatigue levels compared to the moderate-intensity group (65 percent vs. 49 percent less fatigue). So whether it is doing light housework, taking a leisurely stroll or following a yoga video, get moving and reap the benefits. [i](#)

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT EXERCISE

- Is there any reason why I should not exercise?
- Will I need any special monitoring before I begin exercising?
- What exercises do you recommend for me?
- Are there activities I should avoid?
- Are there any warning signs I should look for when I start exercising?

## TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING:

### Protein-rich foods:

- Fish, chicken, turkey, beef and pork
- Eggs
- Peanut butter or other nut butters
- Nuts
- Milk, cottage cheese and yogurt
- Soy milk, edamame and tofu
- Beans and legumes

### Healthy fats:

- Walnuts, almonds or other nuts
- Olive, canola or safflower oil
- Fatty fishes, such as salmon, mackerel, herring, lake trout, sardines and albacore tuna

### Fiber-rich foods:

- Cereals with 6 grams fiber per serving: oatmeal, raisin bran, shredded wheat, Grape Nuts and Kashi
- Bread with 3 grams fiber per slice
- Whole wheat pastas
- Legumes, lentils and beans
- Fruits and vegetables

## TIPS FOR EATING HEALTHY ON LOW-ENERGY DAYS:

- **Eat small, frequent meals** and include a protein-rich food with each meal or snack.
- **Stock your pantry** with extra staples to avoid frequent, energy-draining grocery shopping trips.
- **Keep high-calorie, high-protein nutrition supplements** on hand for easy nutrition on the run, such as Boost Plus, Ensure Plus, Carnation Instant Breakfast or nutrition bars.
- **Try batch cooking.** Ask family or friends to double a favorite recipe or do so yourself on high-energy days. Freeze individual portions for quick, healthy meals.
- **Keep healthy foods on hand that require little preparation,** including pre-packaged pudding and yogurt cups, peanut butter, tuna fish, cottage cheese, eggs, string cheese and soup. (Select cream-based soups for added calories and protein.)

# Caring for your spirit

## Deacon Wayne Charlton offers conversation, prayer to Cancer Center patients

Deacon Wayne Charlton trolls the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center's infusion area, seeking patients who might need a good talk. Every once in a while, he approaches a patient, who responds with a stricken look.

"They get a panicked look on their face like, 'Do you know something I don't?'" Charlton says.

Influenced by too many movies, patients sometimes think a chaplain's only role is to pray for patients near death. But in reality, spiritual care providers like Charlton work with patients with many different types of illnesses—life-threatening or not—to help them work through religious or spiritual issues that are oftentimes a part of illness.

Charlton, who recently joined the Cancer Center, has been helping patients for 20 years as a member of the U-M Health System's Spiritual Care Department.

"I see myself as another resource for hope for patients," Charlton says. "The time I spend with patients is dedicated to caring for their spirit, which needs as much healing as the mind and body."


Charlton says he meets with patients who have a lot of questions, but sometimes they have problems formulating them, often because they are confused or angry. If someone has a religious or spiritual orientation, it can be helpful to work through these questions in that context so that they can use that foundation as a resource for coping.

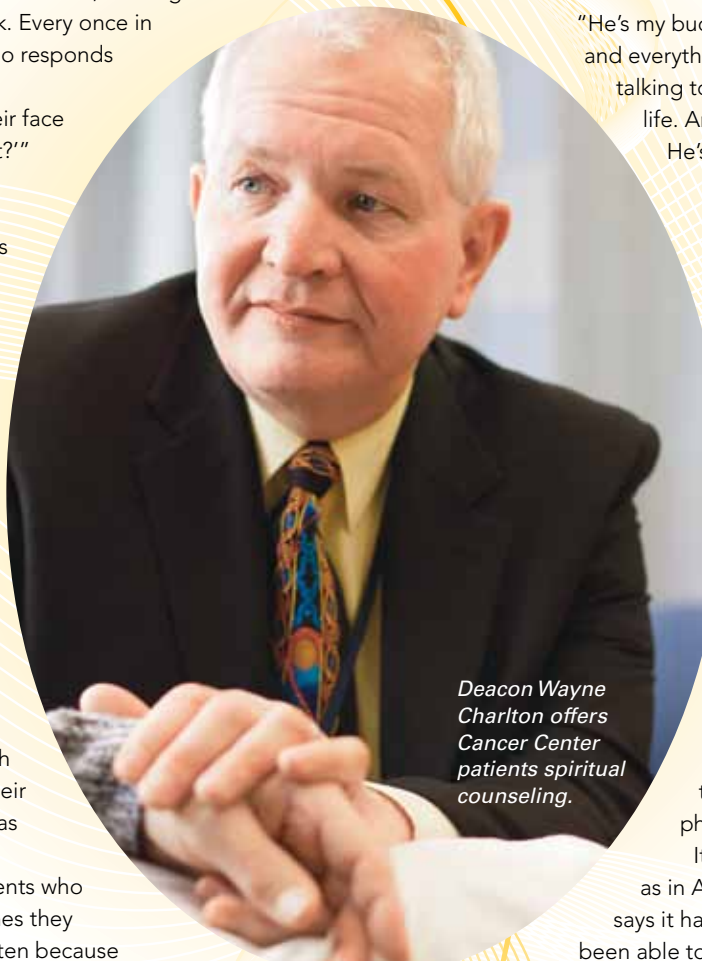
For Al Apsitis, a 64-year-old Howell man who has lymphoma, Charlton has been a brother as much as a chaplain.

"He's my buddy," he says. "We talk about anything and everything—not just church and God. It's like talking to a brother about everything you do in life. And if I need a prayer, he'll say a prayer. He's just a good guy."

When Charlton first meets with new patients, he begins by talking with them to find a common frame of reference. He listens to patients' stories and helps identify what brings them comfort. A key part of Charlton's work involves helping patients to find ways to adapt to the changing landscape of their diagnoses and their lives.

Often, people are so caught up in the logistics of cancer care that they aren't able to take care of themselves emotionally, Charlton says. But when the effects of treatment slow them down to the point where they can't do everything they'd like to, they get frustrated and begin to deal with how the disease is impacting more than the physical and practical aspects of their lives. It can also be difficult to go to church, as in Apsitis's case. Penny Apsitis, Al's wife, says it has been about three years since they've been able to attend their Methodist church.

"You start to feel left out," she says. "Wayne is filling a void in our life. Ministering isn't just talking about God; it's serving God, and he serves God. When he shares with my husband, he's not just sharing prayer. It's compassion and love." 



*Deacon Wayne Charlton offers Cancer Center patients spiritual counseling.*



To make an appointment for a spiritual care consultation, ask your health-care team or call 877-907-0859.



Learn more about the latest cancer research at the University of Michigan at [mCancer.org/thrive](http://mCancer.org/thrive).



## DEPRESSION DRUG MAY RELIEVE PAIN FROM BREAST CANCER TREATMENT, STUDY FINDS

A drug commonly used to treat depression and anxiety disorder was effective at reducing joint and muscle pain associated with a breast cancer treatment, according to a study from the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center. The study was presented recently at the 33rd Annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

The women in the study were taking aromatase inhibitors, a type of drug designed to block the production of estrogen, which fuels some breast cancers. About half of women taking these drugs experience aches and pains in their joints and muscles that cannot be adequately relieved by over-the-counter painkillers. Up to 20 percent of these women will stop taking an aromatase inhibitor because of this pain.

“Since women typically take these drugs for five years, it is important that the side effects not interfere too much with their quality of life, or they will be less likely to continue taking the medicine, which may lead to a greater chance of their breast cancer returning,” said study author N. Lynn Henry, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of internal medicine at the U-M Medical School.

The study looked at the drug duloxetine, or Cymbalta, which is used to treat depression and generalized anxiety disorder. It’s also been shown to work for other chronic pain conditions, such as fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis. It is believed to decrease pain through its actions on the central nervous system.

Of 29 patients evaluated, nearly three-quarters reported that their pain had decreased by at least 30 percent. On average, after eight weeks of treatment, pain scores declined 61 percent. Only one in five patients stopped taking duloxetine because of side effects.

“Duloxetine appears to be effective at reducing the muscle and joint pain many women experience from aromatase inhibitors, with only mild additional side effects,” Henry said.

The researchers are planning a randomized, controlled trial comparing duloxetine to placebo. Henry is also doing research looking at the effect of aromatase inhibitors on pain perception to better understand why women develop pain.

## U-M STUDY LINKS VITAMIN D TO LUNG CANCER SURVIVAL

Recent research suggests vitamin D may be able to stop or prevent cancer. Now, a new study finds that an enzyme that plays a role in metabolizing vitamin D can predict lung cancer survival. The study, published by University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center researchers in the journal *Clinical Cancer Research*, suggests that this enzyme stops the anti-cancer effects of vitamin D.

Levels of the enzyme, called CYP24A1, were elevated as much as 50 times in lung adenocarcinoma compared with normal lung tissue. The higher the level of CYP24A1, the more likely tumors were to be aggressive. About a third of lung cancer patients had high levels of the enzyme. After five years, those patients had nearly half the survival rate as patients with low levels of the enzyme.

Researchers then linked this to how CYP24A1 interacts with calcitriol, the active form of vitamin D. CYP24A1 breaks down calcitriol, which has a normal and crucial role when kept in check. But when levels of CYP24A1 climb, the enzyme begins to hinder the positive anti-cancer effects of vitamin D.

Previous studies have linked low levels of vitamin D to a higher incidence of cancer and worse survival. Researchers are looking at using vitamin D to help prevent lung cancer from returning and spreading after surgery. This new study suggests the possibility of using CYP24A1 levels to personalize this approach to those likely to benefit most.

“Half of lung cancers will recur after surgery, so it’s important to find a way to prevent or delay this recurrence. A natural compound like vitamin D is attractive because it has few side effects, but it’s even better if we can determine exactly who would benefit from receiving vitamin D,” says study author Nithya Ramnath, M.D., associate professor of internal medicine at the U-M Medical School.

Researchers also are working to identify drugs that block CYP24A1. Blocking the enzyme would reinstate the positive anti-cancer effects of vitamin D, suggesting that this inhibitor could potentially be combined with vitamin D treatments.

Vitamin D research continues, but in the meantime, Cancer Center care providers do not recommend exceeding the current recommended dose of 600–800 IU of vitamin D daily.



Danielle Karsies and Emily Mackler

Visit [mCancer.org/thrive](http://mCancer.org/thrive) to view Emily Mackler's videocasts.

## DISCUSSING VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is the media darling of the supplement world: Studies have linked it to lowering the risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. But is it hype? Or should you be paying more attention to your vitamin D intake?

For most people, the recommended daily allowance for vitamin D is 15 mcg or 600 IU per day, according to pharmacist Emily Mackler and registered dietitian Danielle Karsies, both of the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center's Symptom Management & Supportive Care Program. The best way to get it is to eat foods rich in vitamin D, such as fatty fish, egg yolks or milk fortified with the vitamin.

To learn more about the potential of vitamin D and whether you should be taking a supplement, visit [mCancer.org/thrive](http://mCancer.org/thrive) to watch a videocast with Mackler and Karsies.



Do you have a question for the pharmacist? E-mail us at [ThriveMagazine@med.umich.edu](mailto:ThriveMagazine@med.umich.edu). Emily Mackler is a pharmacist in the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center Symptom Management & Supportive Care Program.

Art Therapy:  
877-907-0859

Cancer AnswerLine:  
800-865-1125

Clinical Trials:  
800-865-1125

Fertility Counseling:  
877-907-0859

Financial Counseling:  
734-647-5120

Guided Imagery:  
877-907-0859

Music Therapy:  
877-907-0859

Nutrition Services:  
877-907-0859

Pharmacy:  
734-647-8911

PsychOncology:  
877-907-0859

Social Work:  
800-888-9825

Skills Lab:  
877-907-0859

Smoking Cessation Counseling:  
734-936-5988

Symptom Management & Supportive Care:  
877-907-0859



## THRIVE ONLINE

Thrive doesn't end here! Visit [mCancer.org/thrive](http://mCancer.org/thrive) for more.

Here's what you'll find:

- View a slideshow of patients' cancer awareness walk victories.
- Link to cancer awareness walk websites.
- Read our patients' picks for their favorite ways to spend time online while in the waiting room or during infusion.
- Get more tips on how to evaluate the credibility of online cancer information.
- Link to resources on clinical trials. Learn why they are an important part of cancer care—and find out if one might be right for you.
- We've got more healthy eating tips online. Also, check out Cancer Center Recipes Just for You. Tell the website what you like to eat, and the site will offer healthy recipes customized to your tastes.
- Learn more about the latest research under way at the U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center.

If you're new to *Thrive*, check out our archive. We have lots of advice to share.