



Ovarian Cancer Support Group

Freedom to Be

This article was taken from one published in our July 2005 newsletter

Can you recall the last time you were part of something powerful? That feeling that can come with such an experience? One of having a worthwhile social role and a productive and positive place in society? It's so subtle we don't even think of it in that way, until it is lost and comes tumbling down, lying in pieces at our feet.

Living with an illness such as cancer has a profound impact on a person's life. Many women living with ovarian cancer (and that's most of us reading this now) desire to "take back" control of their lives after the diagnosis is made. Some women feel as if control or independence is removed, in bits and pieces, from the very onset of the disease. Our illness is erratic and unpredictable and requires constant readjusting. What we once knew, suddenly changes, and we feel (at the time at least) that we have no say in these rapid changes at all. We are powerless.

Where is the freedom we once enjoyed? Along with the diagnosis comes continual appointments – lab work, chemo visits, diagnostic x-rays and scans, and the on-going doctor visits that can instill such anxiety and even fear. Even when treatment ends, we are still tied, like an umbilical cord, to our doctor and checkups.

Can we ever recapture those carefree days when our minds were totally light and free? Where we were the commanders of our own ships? Where we charted the waters into which we sailed?

Cynthia Perkins, M.ED., a writer and holistic health consultant, wrote an article about coping with loss caused by chronic illness, in which she says that we are likely to experience multiple losses with our illness that include "loss of independence, loss of identity, ... [and] loss of one's customary lifestyle." What can be even more heartbreaking for some of us is that we may also have to face the possible relinquishing of our hopes and dreams.

Some say we should grieve for our loss of independence and all that it entails. And then, we should get on with beginning to regain control of our lives by becoming knowledgeable about the disease and treatment options, and by making specific choices about how we want to take care of ourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It is almost as if we must redefine ourselves and the ways that we interact with the world. The important thing to remember though, is that we only lose as much freedom or independence as we are willing to let slip out of our lives. Our desire to remain free will carry us through the changes and adaptations we are challenged to make. We can sail *new* waters, walk *new* paths.

*Let freedom be the wind at our back
and the bounce in our step.*



One to One is devoted to the on-going support of those newly diagnosed, those in remission and those in recurrence.

100% of contributions directly benefit our group by providing activities and paying for expenses.

Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made by check payable to **One to One Ovarian Cancer Support Group** c/o Marilyn Brozovic 4793 Alton Dr. Troy, MI 48085

A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.

Nutrition, Gut Health and The Immune System

by Patty Kurpinski

Joining us at our meeting in March was one of our favorite presenters, **Dr. Michael Walker**, ND, FABNO, who practices naturopathic oncology in metro Detroit, at Emcura Integrative Medicine, and through the Beaumont Health Integrative Medicine Department. According to Dr. Walker, from the standpoint of naturopathic medicine, the health of the gastrointestinal tract (“gut”) is essential to overall wellbeing. As many of us know, our gut health can be altered by cancer or its treatments such as chemotherapy, surgery, radiation and some of the newer agents like PARP inhibitors. These treatments can alter the interaction between the microbes normally found in our digestive tract and the body’s cells and organs. The gut is the site of all nutrient breakdown, from chewing of the food to its digestion, absorption, and elimination. Even the synthesis of nutrients takes place in the gut. It is therefore very important to, whenever possible, adopt **preventive** measures that inhibit damage to the gut caused by cancer treatments, and make the necessary **interventions** to help with gut healing.

In recent years we have come to understand that gut health is very much related to our immune system. We must therefore make sure we are getting enough nutrition. Supporting a healthy immunity can be achieved by using **prebiotics**, which promote the growth of beneficial microorganisms and bacteria in the gut. Some examples include, cocoa, green tea, apples, pears, and inulin rich foods, such as burdock, chicory, artichoke, garlic, leek, dandelion root, dates and prunes. **Probiotics**, which are live microorganisms found in fermented foods, such as yogurt, are thought to be beneficial as well. Clinical trials are being done to study their use and the ways these agents may affect us individually. Behavioral changes such as managing stress and maintaining good sleep habits are other positive ways we can improve our gut and immune health.



It's important to understand that antibiotics can kill some of the good bacteria that reside in our gut. Many of us don't realize that antibiotics in our gut can originate in the foods we eat. Nutrients are meant to be absorbed but this process is disrupted by an imbalance of gut flora, which in turn can lead to other diseases as in irritable bowel syndrome or “Leaky Gut.”

Some modifiable factors that could make a difference in our digestive health include the following:

- 1) Environmental and Behavioral: Avoid alcohol, smoking, and psychological stress. A good practice would include exercise, mindfulness meditation, and good sleep.**
- 2) Diet: Eat a high fiber diet and include fermented foods, while avoiding sugar, high fructose, and some artificial sweeteners.**
- 3) Other Interventions: Medications, certain herbs and botanical extracts as in alkaloids or polysaccharides, L-glutamine and omega-3 (fish oil), and therapeutic fasting are all great ways to improve both your gut health and support a healthy immune system.**

Human health is greatly impacted by the gut and digestive health, including the bacteria and other microbes residing there, and of course, the food we eat. We extend a THANK YOU to Dr. Walker, for giving us a better understanding of the complexity and the importance of our gastrointestinal tract.

Tell Your Story

by Marcia Gurche

Telling the story of your diagnosis and your cancer journey can be therapeutic and also very rewarding. When I became involved with the Survivors Teaching Students, Saving Women's Lives® (STS) Program and the Survivors Promoting Education and Knowledge (SPEAK) Programs, it was the tonic I needed to help me begin to take back my life following my diagnosis. As the "Freedom to Be" article suggests, I needed to take control of my life, and being a part of these programs gave me that ability. Going out and talking to students who are studying to become health care professionals through the STS Program and talking to the general public through the SPEAK program is truly gratifying. Not only are these young future health care providers hearing stories and being given the opportunity to put a face with the disease of ovarian cancer, but we are also empowering women to become their own advocates.



If you have any interest in becoming involved with either of these groups, please contact me at mgurche@gmail.com and I will gladly provide you with all the information you need. Additionally, there is an upcoming SPEAK presentation via Zoom, which you are welcome to attend, which will give you an idea of what it's like to be a SPEAK or STS presenter. The presentation is being hosted by **Gilda's Club** on **Wednesday, June 8th at 12:00 noon**. Kathy Mills will be presenting her story for the first time, along with two other people, and I will be facilitating. If you are interested in joining the presentation, please contact Gilda's Club and register for the meeting.

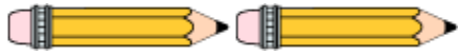
FLY FISHING WELLNESS RETREAT



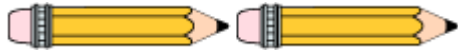
Reeling & Healing Midwest is a two-and-a-half-day retreat for women battling or surviving cancer. The mission is to introduce women to the healing powers of fly fishing by providing a one-of-a-kind experience, both on and off the river. It is designed to renew their spirit and hope through the combined elements of fly fishing, nature, peer coaching, positive camaraderie and support. Retreats are led by professional facilitators and certified fly fishing instructors – no prior fishing experience is required! The cost for the new participant to attend starts at \$35. All equipment, lodging and meals are provided. This amazing event takes place on the beautiful **Au Sable River** in **Grayling, Michigan**. Many of our *One to One* ladies have participated over the years and have come back with wonderful memories.

Retreat dates for 2022 are: July 24-July 26; August 14-August 16; August 21-August 23 and August 28-August 30.

Dates fill up fast so you must register now. For more information go to FishOn.org or Call **616-855-4017**.



THE POW! ER OF WORDS



"Lexophile" describes those that have a love for words and their creative use, as in, "You can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish," or "To write with a broken pencil is pointless." An annual competition is held by the New York Times to see who can create the best original wordplay. Check these out:

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationary.

If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the crossed-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

When chemists die, they barium.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

This girl today said she recognized me from the Vegetarians Club, but I'd swear I've never met herbivore.

I know a guy who's addicted to drinking brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

Please note : MEETING CHANGES!

We will be returning to monthly meetings starting in June. Time will be 6:00 pm. AND we will be meeting IN PERSON at the Berkley Public Library, 3155 Coolidge Hwy., Berkley. The first in-person meeting will be June 9. We will be sending a Zoom meeting link to those who cannot attend in person.

meeting

Please join us for our upcoming meetings:

* May 12, 4 pm *

Zoom Meeting: Mindfulness

May 26, 6 pm

Zoom Meeting: Conversation

* June 9, 6 pm *

In person at Berkley Library

An email will be sent to everyone four days prior to each video support group meeting asking if you would like to participate. A separate email with a link will be sent to those who reply.

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HAPPY SURVIVORsary!

GennyBeaudrie 27 years!

Letha Williams 22

Gail Bidinger 9

Barbara Blakemore 5

Bonita Gardner 3

Paula Smith 2



Objectives of support group:

- ◆ Provide a forum for ovarian cancer patients to address concerns;
- ◆ Support each other through initial treatment phase, during potential recurrence, and with issues related to long term survival;
- ◆ Establish core group of survivors willing to visit newly diagnosed patients;
- ◆ Increase awareness of ovarian cancer, including its symptoms and risk factors, in the hope of achieving earlier detection and treatment.

Newsletter information is presented in summary form, is general in nature and provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended in any way to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.