

SurvivorTimes

A NEWSLETTER FOR CANCER SURVIVORS

ISSUE 27 | OCTOBER 2025

Sponsored by the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program



CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF SURVIVOR TIMES!



Dear Readers,

In the world of cancer care, every step forward, no matter how small, is a triumph. Whether you're a patient walking through the doors of treatment for the first time, a caregiver standing strong beside someone you love, or a staff member giving your all day after day, **this newsletter is for you.**

The **Survivor Times** is more than just stories, recipes, and puzzles, **it's a celebration of life.** It's about honoring the everyday victories: a heartfelt laugh in the waiting room, a comforting meal shared after treatment, or the quiet, steadfast courage it takes to believe in tomorrow.

In this issue, you'll find real stories of kindness, a nourishing recipe that brings comfort without compromise, and a few good laughs (because, yes, humor heals too). Most importantly, we hope these pages remind you that you are seen, you are valued, and you are part of a strong, resilient, and beautiful community.

From all of us to you ... **thank you for your strength.** May these pages bring you hope, light, and a whole lot of heart.

At every point along the cancer journey, one thing remains constant: **Quality of life matters.** That's why the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program is committed to supporting you through evidence-based therapies that

nourish the mind, body, and spirit. From nutrition and physical activity to emotional and spiritual well-being, our integrative programs are designed to ease stress, relieve side effects, and help you feel more in control.

Best of all, **every program we offer is free for cancer survivors.** Our lectures, workshops, and activities provide opportunities for education, connection, and support. They're places where you can share your story, be inspired by others, and discover new ways to thrive.

Remember: Reaching out to your care team, to fellow survivors, or to us can make all the difference. **You are not alone.**

If you'd like to contribute an article or support the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program with a donation, I'd love to hear from you. You can reach me at mehr-bonnie@cooperhealth.edu

Be Well,

Bonnie Mehr

Editor in Chief, *Survivor Times*
Director, Integrative Oncology Services Director
The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program
MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As director of MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper, I am proud to share that we are witnessing a transformative era in cancer care.

Thanks to decades of dedicated research, innovative treatment strategies, and a deep commitment to personalized medicine, people diagnosed with cancer today are living longer, and living better, than ever before.

Survival rates across many cancer types have steadily improved. Many cancer diagnoses that were once insurmountable are now treatable and, in many cases, manageable as a chronic condition. These gains are not just statistics, they represent more time with loved ones, more milestones reached, and more lives lived with dignity and purpose.

At the forefront of this progress are the groundbreaking treatments now shaping the future of oncology: immunotherapies that empower the body's own immune system, precision medicine that targets cancer at the molecular level, and advanced surgical, radiation, and minimally invasive techniques that are more effective and less invasive.



MD Anderson at Cooper remains a hub for innovation, where clinical trials open doors to tomorrow's therapies and multidisciplinary teams ensure every patient receives comprehensive evidence-based care.

But beyond science and medicine, we never lose sight of what matters most: the patient experience. We understand that every individual walk-

ing through our doors brings not just a diagnosis but a story, a family, and a future. That's why we are committed to compassionate personalized care that supports the whole person, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

As we continue to advance beyond the boundaries of today's cancer care, we remain deeply rooted in our mission: to deliver hope, healing, and the highest standard of care to every patient we serve.

With gratitude and resolve,

Generosa Grana, MD, FACP

Director, MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

MD Anderson Cancer Center Cooper

Making Cancer History®

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

Becoming a cancer survivor starts the moment a patient is diagnosed, and at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper we realize that physical healing is only part of our mission.

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program enhances traditional cancer treatment by focusing on mind, body, and spirit. The program offers a variety of mind-body therapies performed by certified therapists and practitioners.

Our complementary therapies are designed to lessen the pain, stress, and anxiety associated with a cancer diagnosis. They also provide assistance in managing the side effects of traditional treatments, such as radiation and chemotherapy.

The following are available throughout the year in our Voorhees location:

- Stretch, Flex, Breathe
- Healing Through Writing And Journaling
- Gentle Chair Yoga
- Tai Chi for Optimal Health
- Mindfulness
- Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength
- Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing
- Let's Talk Nutrition for Optimal Health
- Qigong
- Gentle Body Movement for Continued Healing
- Guided Imagery for Continued Healing
- Body Movement to Fun Dance Music
- Creative Arts for Healing
- The Art and Healing of Self Massage
- Seeds of Hope Project
- Survivor Times Newsletter

Program Highlights

- The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program has provided services to thousands of cancer survivors at no cost, regardless of where they receive care, since its inception in 2004.
- **Comfort Snack Bag Program:** This program provides comfort snack bags to our patients in our Camden and Voorhees locations five days a week. These snack bags positively impact the quality of the chemo infusion and Rad Onc experience.
- **The Healing Paws Project:** The Healing Paws Project is a certified pet therapy program bringing specially trained therapy dogs to cancer patients, caregivers, and staff, offering emotional support, calm, and connection across our cancer center locations.



Survivor Times Newsletter



Participants bask in a sense of community, nurturing friendships, and the mutual support they have experienced through The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program.

For any questions, please contact Program Director Bonnie Mehr at mehr-bonnie@CooperHealth.edu

Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program, Patient Education, and Support and Survivorship Programs Class Schedule September – December 2025





 Making Cancer History®

Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

OCTOBER

October 7	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Body Movement for Improving Flexibility Guided Imagery for Continued Healing Healing Through Writing and Journaling
October 8	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health Let's Talk Nutrition for Optimal Health
October 9	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Mindfulness Creative Arts for Healing
October 14	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Stretch, Flex and Breathe Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing Through Writing and Journaling
October 15	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	The Art and Healing of Self Massage Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Guided Imagery for Continued Healing
October 16	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Body Movement for Improving Flexibility Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing
October 21	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Mindfulness Stretch, Flex and Breathe Healing Through Writing and Journaling
October 22	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Mindfulness Creative Arts for Healing
October 23	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health Let's Talk Nutrition for Optimal Health
October 29	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Stretch, Flex and Breathe Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing Healing Through Writing and Journaling
October 30	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Body Movement for Improving Flexibility The Art and Healing of Self Massage Guided Imagery for Continued Healing

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Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

Please join us for a variety of **in-person** complementary medicine therapies and activities. Classes are available to cancer survivors at any point in the cancer journey – before, during, and after cancer treatment.

In addition to the in-person classes below, we invite you to join our Seeds of Hope Project. Seeds of Hope participants help water, harvest, and bag the organic vegetables we grow in our Voorhees Garden. The vegetables are shared with MD Anderson at Cooper patients and team members.

Please note: Due to space limitations and health and safety protocols, our in-person complementary medicine classes are not open to family members or caregivers.

For questions or more information contact:
 Bonnie Mehr, Director, The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program and Director, Integrative Oncology Services at mehr-bonnie@cooperhealth.edu

Location:
 Cooper Voorhees Clock Tower Building
 931 Centennial Boulevard
 Voorhees Township, NJ 08043

Masking is optional at the time of printing, but our policies are subject to change. No registration is required.

SEPTEMBER

September 9	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Stretch, Flex, and Breathe Healing Through Writing and Journaling
September 10	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Gentle Chair Yoga Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health
September 16	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing Let's Talk Nutrition for Optimal Health
September 17	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Gentle Body Movement for Improving Flexibility Guided Imagery for Continued Healing
September 18	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Stretch, Flex and Breathe Healing Through Writing and Journaling Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing
September 23	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health Healing Through Writing and Journaling
September 24	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Mindfulness Creative Arts for Healing
September 25	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Let's Talk Nutrition for Optimal Health Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing Stretch, Flex and Breathe



CLICK HERE OR
 SCAN THE CODE
 TO DOWNLOAD THE FULL
 SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:



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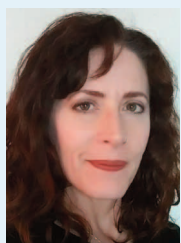
Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

NOVEMBER

November 4	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Chair Yoga Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Let's Talk Nutrition for Optimal Health
November 5	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Body Movement for Improving Flexibility Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health
November 6	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Mindfulness Creative Arts for Healing
November 11	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Stretch, Flex and Breathe Healing Through Writing and Journaling
November 12	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Breathwork & Centering for Positive Healing Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health The Art and Healing of Self Massage
November 13	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength Gentle Chair Yoga Guided Imagery for Continued Healing
November 18	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Gentle Body Movement for Improving Flexibility Let's Talk Nutrition and the Holidays Mindfulness
November 19	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Mindfulness Creative Arts for Healing
November 20	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Stretch, Flex and Breathe The Art and Healing of Self Massage Healing Through Writing and Journaling
November 25	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Breathwork and Centering for Positive Healing Tai/Chi Gong for Optimal Health Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength
November 26	10 to 11 a.m. 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.	Stretch, Flex and Breathe Guided Imagery for Continued Healing Gentle Chair Yoga



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A SEASON OF RENEWAL: Join Us This Autumn for Healing, Movement, and Mindful Connection

Jennifer Jennings, Practitioner, the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

My name is Jenn Jennings, and for over 15 years, I've had the honor of supporting cancer patients and survivors as a practitioner through the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper. It has been a privilege to witness the strength, resilience, and transformation of those I've worked with, and nothing brings me greater joy than helping others discover the healing power of movement, nutrition, and creative expression.

This autumn, I warmly invite you to join us for a new season of complementary medicine classes designed with your whole self in mind ... body, mind, and spirit. Whether you're looking to build physical strength, find mental clarity, or simply reconnect with joy, there's something here for you.

Held in the serene and welcoming Clock Tower space in Voorhees, these classes are open to all cancer patients and survivors. There's no need to register in advance, simply drop in whenever your schedule allows. These sessions are tailored to meet you exactly where you are, regardless of your physical ability or prior experience. All that's required is a desire to show up for yourself and enjoy the journey.

If you're eager to move and feel stronger, try our **Gentle Exercise for Building Stamina and Core Strength** class. This class supports improved balance and muscle tone, helping you maintain or regain independence and vitality in daily life.

For those with limited mobility or who prefer a seated experience, we offer **Gentle Chair Yoga** and **Stretch, Flex, and Breathe**, both designed to promote flexibility,



circulation, and relaxation. These classes are perfect for all levels and can be adapted to your personal comfort and pace.

If your mind feels more restless than your body, consider joining one of our classes focused on inner peace and emotional resilience. **Healing Through Writing and Journaling**, **Guided Imagery for Continued Healing**, and **Mindfulness** offer powerful tools to manage fear, anxiety, and intrusive thoughts, opening the door to more joy, calm, and presence in your daily life.

For those drawn to creativity, we offer **Creative Arts for Healing** and **The Art of Self Massage**, both of which invite you to explore healing through touch, expression, and play. These hands-on experiences are as therapeutic as they are enjoyable.

And if you've ever been curious about the ancient practices of **tai chi** and **qigong** but felt hesitant to try, our beginner-friendly class is the perfect place to start. Designed to gently build balance, coordination, and endurance, this class invites you into a graceful, meditative form of movement. No martial arts background is required.

These offerings are just a glimpse of what the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program has prepared for you this season. We've created a supportive and joyful environment where you can feel safe, empowered, and connected. I truly hope you'll join me and our team of dedicated practitioners this September at the Clock Tower in Voorhees.

Let's explore the path to wellness together. I look forward to seeing you soon. ■

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

Seeds of Hope

PROJECT

The Seeds of Hope Project is run through The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program:

- The Seeds of Hope Project is an organic vegetable garden planned, planted, and tended by our cancer survivors. It is located on our Voorhees campus (behind the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program Healing Garden). Harvests from the garden are shared with MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper patients receiving treatment in our infusion centers.
- For more information or to make a donation, contact Bonnie Mehr at mehr-bonnie@cooperhealth.edu.



I Am in Love With Nature *Poem by cancer survivor Felicia Saunders*
Despite the fact that she can be: unpredictable, intimidating, and destructive. For she is also nurturing, giving, and awesomely beautiful. She speaks to me. She heals, comforts, and soothes me. Nature is one of my best friends.



Recent Study Finds Gardening Can Improve Outcomes in Some Cancer Survivors

By **Bonnie Mehr**, Director, Integrative Oncology Services
Director, The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program offers cancer survivors the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities and therapies designed to heal the mind, body, and soul. One of our most popular and rewarding programs is our Seeds of Hope horticultural therapy program. The Seeds of Hope garden is an organic garden planned, planted, and tended by our cancer survivors. It is located on our Voorhees campus (behind the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program Healing Garden). Harvests from the garden are shared with MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper patients receiving treatment at our infusion centers.

Horticultural therapy is accepted as a beneficial and effective therapy. It is widely used within a broad range of rehabilitative, vocational, and community settings. Horticultural therapy helps improve memory, cognitive abilities, language skills, and socialization. In physical rehabilitation, it can help strengthen muscles and improve coordination, balance, and endurance.

A recent study supported these findings and found additional benefits for some cancer survivors.

The study was conducted by researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Comprehensive Cancer Center and involved 82 female breast cancer survivors residing in Alabama. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to participate in a yearlong gardening program with master gardeners and the other half were put on a waiting list for the program. The wait-list group served as the control group.

The study measured how cancer survivors responded to the therapy, how it affected their diet and exercise behaviors, health-related quality of life, biomarkers of successful aging and intestinal health, and physical functioning.

Throughout the yearlong pilot study, the survivor/master gardener teams planned and planted three gardens for fall, spring, and summer. Surveys collected data on the survivors' diet, physical activity, and quality of life.

The findings, published in the prestigious medical journal *Cancer*, demonstrated that for cancer survivors, three seasons of home vegetable gardening may increase physical activity, a diet filled with more fruits and vegetables, and enhanced feelings of self-worth. Possibly as a result of these healthy behaviors, gardeners in the small study also tended to gain less weight around their waists compared to counterparts not participating in the study.

After one year, 40% of participants were eating at least one more vegetable and fruit serving a day. The researchers said that while increasing vegetable and fruit intake was the focus, subjects also improved their exercise level. Their physical functioning improved greatly. 60% of participants engaged in at least 30 minutes or more of physical activity every week. All improved in three out of four objective measures of strength, agility, and endurance.

Among participants in the gardening groups, 91% stayed with the program through the one-year follow-up, 70% said their experience was "excellent," and 85% said they "would do it again."

While the study was small, it shows that vegetable gardening may provide a holistic approach to improving diet quality, physical activity, body weight status, and psychosocial well-being. ■

REFERENCE: Jennifer R. Bail PhD, RN, Andrew D. Frugé, PhD, RD, et al "A home-based mentored vegetable gardening intervention demonstrates feasibility and improvements in physical activity and performance among breast cancer survivors." *CANCER*, vol 124, no. 116, pp. 3427-3435, August 15, 2018, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cnrc.31559



Announcing the Healing Paws Project

LAUNCHING
FALL 2025



by Bonnie Mehr, Director, Integrative Oncology Services
Director, the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program
MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

I am proud and honored to officially announce the upcoming launch of the Healing Paws Project, a certified pet therapy program devoted to bringing the healing presence of specially trained therapy dogs to individuals impacted by cancer across multiple MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper locations.

This heartfelt initiative made possible through the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program, reflects our deep commitment to supporting not just physical healing, but the emotional and spiritual well-being of every patient, caregiver, and team member we serve.

Where Comfort Has Four Legs and a Wagging Tail

The Healing Paws Project is a compassionate and thoughtfully designed pet therapy initiative created to bring comfort, connection, and calm to patients, families, and staff throughout the cancer care journey.

At the heart of this program are certified therapy dog teams — gentle, intuitive companions who offer more than a brief distraction. With each visit, they bring emotional support, lift spirits, and create meaningful moments of presence, peace, and hope.

The Power of Presence

In the soft nudge of a therapy dog's nose or the quiet stillness of a visit chairside during treatment, something extraordinary happens. Anxiety fades. Isolation softens. Smiles return. Patients rediscover the joy of being seen, supported, and comforted — not just by their medical team, but by a loyal friend with a warm heart and a wagging tail.

The Healing Paws Project helps transform the clinical environment into a more welcoming, human, and healing space.

Why the Healing Paws Project Matters

Each therapy dog visit offers more than comfort — it creates an opportunity for emotional relief, grounding, and human connection.

Program Benefits Include:

- Easing stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue during treatment
- Enhancing relaxation, emotional balance, and morale
- Creating joyful shared moments between patients, staff, and families
- Providing relief and comfort for caregivers and loved ones
- Reducing feelings of fear, sadness, and isolation
- Supporting physical well-being with lowered blood pressure and improved mood
- Encouraging trust and engagement in the clinical experience
- Fostering a more compassionate care environment
- Reinforcing the human spirit through moments of presence and unconditional love

A Mission Rooted in Compassion

Rooted in empathy and guided by clinical excellence, the Healing Paws Project is more than a program ... it is a mission to bring hope and healing in every paw step. Whether it's a moment of stillness by the chemotherapy chair, a gentle wag in the waiting room, or the knowing gaze of a therapy dog who simply understands, these quiet, profound moments can transform lives.

We are deeply honored to welcome our therapy dog teams as beloved members of the healing journey, offering not just care but companionship, joy, and love when it's needed most.

Because healing doesn't begin with medicine alone... it begins with compassion.





Center for Integrative Oncology

by Pallav K. Mehta, MD
Hematologist/Medical Oncologist
Director of the Center for Integrative Oncology
MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

When we speak with cancer survivors through our practices, we often hear the word "balance..."

Depending on the patient, this word may mean different things in particular, but in a general sense it means that the person has achieved, or is working to achieve, equilibrium in life.

Physically, it may mean that patients eat healthfully and happily, they get the lion's share of their nutrition through locally grown, whole, mostly plant-based foods, and still treat themselves on occasion to an ice cream cone or a glass of their favorite red wine. It may mean that they exercise three days a week by running on a treadmill to get their heart rate up but two days a week they exercise by an activity that also gives them pleasure and a deep spiritual satisfaction.

For patients to have balance, it also means that they have equilibrium among the mind, body, and spirit; they are in good emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Whatever "balance" means to a particular person, we have seen time and time

"For patients to have balance, it also means that they have equilibrium among the mind, body and spirit; that they are in good emotional, physical, and spiritual health."

again that having gone through cancer treatments and come out the other end can help people move toward a better sense of balance in their lives. And the better balanced they are, the better they are able to move forward and engage in happy and satisfying lives.

You have gone through something life threatening and life altering. After treatment is over, there is truly a new normal, and your perspective and motivations in life tend to change. Trying to figure out where that leaves you is difficult. Things in your life won't necessarily go back to the way they were before you had cancer. Following cancer, you have an opportunity to both accept and create the new you. This is a process and not a product! A cancer diagnosis is a chance for a person to think deeply about what he/she has done with their life and what they want to do in the future.

The New Normal ... to find balance, it is important for cancer patients to realize that what they think is normal before treatment will not necessarily be their normal after treatment. Changes can include physical appearance, short- and long-term goals, and their view of the world.

Suggestions for finding your new normal include but are not limited to: reducing the negatives, finding the positives, doing for others, embracing social support, developing spirituality, and finding your rhythm. We all have only one life. This is your chance to make the best of it. ■

MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY

Integrative Oncology outpatient consultations are now available with

Pallav K. Mehta, MD

Director of Integrative Oncology,
MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
Co-Author of *After Cancer Care: The Definitive Self-Care Guide to Getting and Staying Well for Patients After Cancer*

Consultations are made by appointment by calling 1.855.632.2667. For more information, please talk to a member of your cancer care team.

An Integrative Oncology consultation with Dr. Mehta can guide you through cancer diagnosis, treatment, and long-term survivorship with strength and confidence.

Dr. Mehta is a staunch believer that traditional cancer treatment combined with a focus on strengthening the body through exercise and nutrition and empowering the mind to manage stress and anxiety can result in optimized cancer treatment and a return to wellness.

The Integrative Oncology Program focuses on incorporating the three pillars of a healthy lifestyle — nutrition, physical activity, and emotional health — into the patient's care plan no matter where they are in their cancer journey.



THE THREE PILLARS OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

An Integrative Oncology consultation can help you with:

- Symptom management
- Nutrition
- Understanding the benefits and risks of supplements
- Exercise and physical activity
- Physical rehabilitation
- Emotional health and psychosocial needs
- Incorporating complementary medicine options into your care plan

Victorious

by Frances Anne Cooney and Toby Weitzman

Toby Weitzman and Frances Anne Cooney met several years ago and developed a special friendship. They were both born on August 9, both live in the same complex, are both cancer survivors, and are both very creative.

Toby is an abstract artist and Frances Anne is a writer. Their commonalities are extensive and their cancer voyage has brought them even closer.

In April 2023, Fran was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer. Her diagnosis, treatment plan, and healing are documented in her journal "Cancer for a Leo" that depicts each phase of every day during her illness. It was quite the feat, but writing was her savior during these dark times. The wonderful doctors and nurses of MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper were the best; Drs. Generosa Grana, Catherine E. Loveland-Jones, and Anthony Dragun on her team truly saved her life!

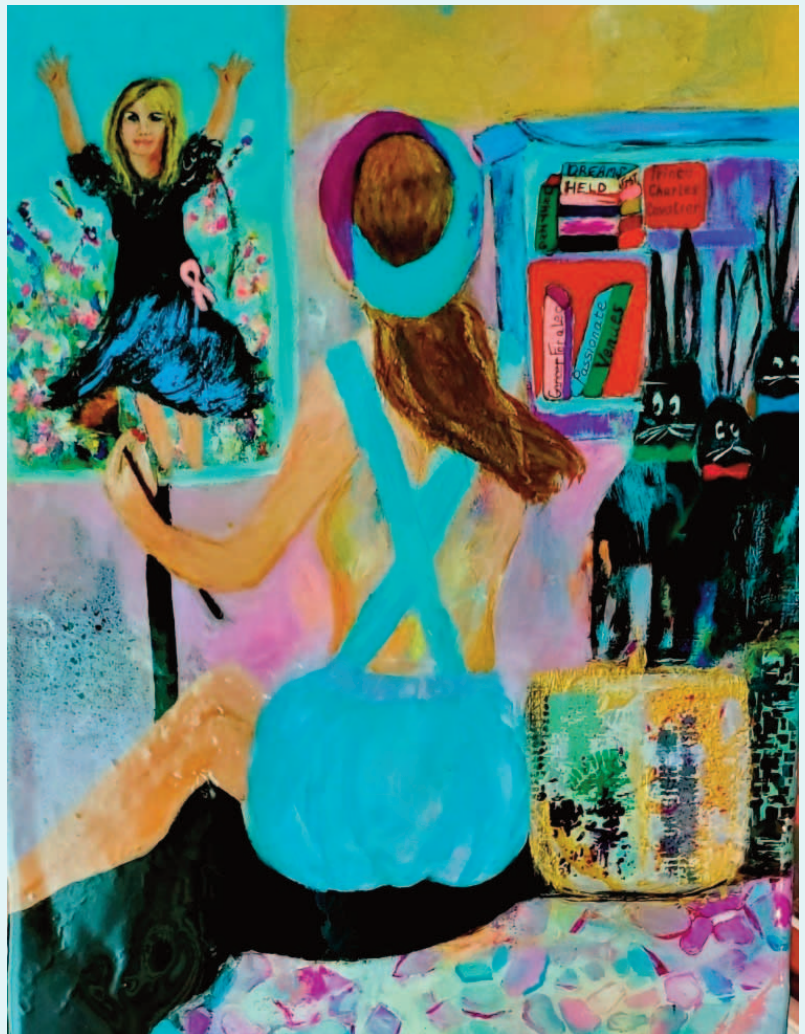
Shortly after that, Toby was struck down with cancer and both endured the seemingly endless treatments while sharing their gifts of art and writing — their saving grace!

In Toby's beautiful art piece, she sees Fran triumphant, running and cheering as she gets the news she is cancer free. Toby is painting her while the sweet and funny bunnies look on. Toby also shows Fran's books in an eccentric bookshelf. This colorful surreal work of art is a happy ending for them both.

Cancer is awful, but we can make the cure memorable and derive joy as we rejoice and discover that victory can be extraordinary through art.

We have named the piece **"Victorious."** ■

If you want Toby to paint your or someone else's journey, she is available for you to share your story through her colorful artistry.



Dr. Grana with
Frances Anne
Cooney.



Toby Weitzman and her
painting "Victorious"
with Fran Cooney.

Contact info for Toby Weitzman is [Weitzmantoby](#) on Instagram
To obtain a free copy of "Cancer for a Leo," contact francooney58@yahoo.com.

Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA)

What is AYA?

Adolescent and young adult cancer care that focuses on individuals diagnosed with cancer between the ages of 19 to 39.

This particular age group has unique needs, and our mission is to improve the experience of this group and the experience of their loved ones. Some of those needs may include oncofertility, psychological support, and family and career support. Together, as a multidisciplinary team with the input of patients, we will develop and implement a program that will support and impact this patient population.

If you would like to participate in helping us to develop this program, please click the link below to fill out our survey and to join one of our focus groups that will be offered in the coming months. By being a part of the focus group, you will help us develop a meaningful program for young adult patients and their families. If you would like to learn more, please contact Christina Hunter at hunter-christina@cooperhealth.edu ■



**CLICK HERE OR SCAN
THE QR CODE TO FILL
OUT OUR SURVEY.**



Should You Be on a Plant-Based Diet?

by Linda Goldsmith RD, Outpatient Oncology Dietitian,
MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

Public health guidelines encourage following a plant-based diet for general well-being. Evidence indicates this type of diet is useful for both cancer survivors and for those trying to prevent cancer. The American Cancer Society specifically encourages consumption of two and a half cups of fruits and vegetables every day.

Fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants and other cancer-fighting nutrients. They are high in fiber and relatively low in fat and calories. Increasing fiber in the diet promotes proper bowel function and makes you feel full longer. Therefore, consuming a plant-based diet can help patients achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

So, with those benefits, why isn't everyone eating a plant-based diet? Convenience and taste can be major barriers that prevent people from meeting their fruit and vegetable goal. Fast food is on every corner, and it is much easier to eat a burger or a donut when you're rushing than to sit down to a nice salad. But what if you could just drink your veggies? Eating fruits or vegetables whole is the preferred option, but if you just can't meet daily requirements, juicing and smoothies can be packed with all the stuff we RDs love about plants!

Juicing:

Juicing involves extracting the juice from fruits and/or vegetables.

Pros: Juicing can be a way to incorporate fruits and vegetables in a condensed form.

Cons: Because you lose the benefits of fiber through juicing, blood sugar levels can spike.

Smoothie:

Smoothies are thick beverages made from fruits and vegetables; other ingredients such as juice, milk, or yogurt can also be incorporated.

Smoothies are often advertised as a healthy snack option, meal replacement, or post-workout supplement. However, smoothies purchased from restaurants, fast food establishments, gyms, or ice cream shops are often filled with added sugar.

But buyer beware! Per Smoothie King's website, one 20oz.



MD Anderson at Cooper oncology dietitian staff
Joanna Myers-Casale, Linda Goldsmith

Banana Boat Smoothie is made from bananas, vanilla frozen yogurt, vanilla protein blend, and turbinado sugar. This smoothie contains 477 calories, 12g protein, 6g saturated fat, and 77g of sugar (4 grams of sugar is equal to 1 teaspoon, making this shake 19 teaspoons of sugar!)

Pros: When fruits and vegetables are blended, they use the whole fruit, so you don't lose the fiber. Also, it is easy to incorporate protein into a smoothie.

Cons: As noted above, if you are not making the smoothies yourself, find out how much sugar is being added.

Recommendations for choosing the right smoothie:

- **Consider a vegetable-based shake:** spinach, carrots, beets, etc.
- **Measure out fruit** (just enough for flavor). Try frozen bananas, pineapple, apple, or lemon to hide vegetable flavors (baby spinach and carrots are the easiest to mask).
- **Add protein with:** peanut, almond, or cashew butter, yogurt, milk, or soy milk (watch for added sugars here if you are trying hard to skip the sugar).
- **Get creative** and try adding oats, chia seeds, or flax seed into your shakes for additional fiber.

Smoothies and juices can be part of a balanced diet but be sure to incorporate whole grains and protein as well. Consider why you want to incorporate smoothies into your diet. You might be interested in weight loss or weight gain. Or maybe you are just trying to get more veggies into your diet in a very palatable way. No matter your motivation, smoothies may be right for you! ■

Dr. Mehta's Daily Morning Green Drink

This will make about 1½ quarts, so cut in half if needed for one person.

- 12 oz. of water or coconut water
- 1 cup of spinach or kale
- ½ cucumber (peeled makes for a less gritty drink)
- 1 celery stalk
- ½ cup parsley
- ½ cup mint (extra is fine, as it makes for a refreshing taste)
- 1 small carrot (also peeled if possible)
- 1 medium apple, cored (Honeycrisp and Fuji tend to be best)
- ½ cup pineapple
- ¼ orange, no skin
- ⅛ lime, no skin
- ⅛ lemon, no skin
- 1 cup ice
- 1 tsp of agave or honey to taste

Blend in high-powered blender for 60 seconds. Enjoy!



Cauliflower Crust Rainbow Pizza

Low-carb cauliflower crust rainbow pizza is packed with veggies inside and out and is perfect for kids and adults. Top this delicious pizza with any type of veggies you have. Use whatever is in season or your favorite pizza toppings. Just be sure to dice the veggies really small and arrange them from light to dark to create a rainbow look. Begin by making the crust. Cauliflower pizza crust is much faster to make than regular pizza crust because no rising time is needed.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

CRUST:

- 1 small to medium-sized head of cauliflower—should yield 2 to 3 cups once processed
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 egg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon basil or rosemary, minced (or dry)
- ½ teaspoon oregano minced (or dry)

TOPPINGS:

- ½ cup marinara sauce
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup diced bell peppers (yellow, orange, red, green, or any combo of your choice)
- ½ cup broccoli florets
- ½ cup diced red onion
- ¼ cup canned corn (optional and not included in nutritional facts)
- ½ cup tomatoes diced

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 500 degrees F.
2. Remove the stems from the cauliflower and cut into chunks. Place the cauliflower into a food processor and pulse it until it resembles the texture of rice. If you don't have a food processor, you can use a



3. Microwave the processed cauliflower uncovered in a microwave-safe bowl for approximately 4-5 minutes on high. Remove it from the microwave and allow it to cool for at least 4-5 minutes (Trust me, don't rush this step!) After the cauliflower is slightly cooled, place it in a kitchen towel and squeeze all the liquid out of it. Be sure to squeeze as much liquid as humanly possible.
4. Combine the cooked cauliflower, egg, garlic powder, cheese, and seasonings. Stir until a dough texture forms. Spread the cauliflower mixture out onto lightly greased parchment paper or a pizza pan in the shape of a pizza crust.
5. Bake the crust for approximately 10-15 minutes (depending on your oven) or until the crust is golden and crispy. I cook mine for approximately 15 minutes. After the crust is golden, remove it from the oven and top with pizza sauce, then cheese, then the chopped veggies.

6. Place the pizza back in the oven and bake for another 12-15 minutes.

Nutrition Facts

Amount Per Serving

Calories 197

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 11.1g **17%**

Saturated Fat 6g **30%**

Cholesterol 79mg **26%**

Sodium 710.5mg **30%**

Total Carbohydrate 13.1g **4%**

Dietary Fiber 3.6g **14%**

Sugars 7.3 g

Protein 12g **24%**

Vitamin A 18%

Vitamin C 117%

Calcium 25%

Iron 8%



Every Precious Day

by Richard D. Lackman, MD, Former Director, Orthopaedic Oncology Center, MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

Having worked for 35 years as an orthopaedic cancer surgeon, I have certainly experienced life in an unusual way. This has been a wonderful experience for me, though trying at times. Yet these experiences have provided me with insight that I would not otherwise have attained. I was asked to write a short discourse on what it means to be a cancer survivor, and I have attempted to relate my viewpoint in the following paragraphs.

What does it mean to be a cancer survivor? Truth be told, every day each one of us is a life survivor. I have not yet figured out why it is that our Creator took so much effort to put us here and yet made it temporary. I suspect, however, that the answer to this question may exist in the larger view of the universe around us. Not only are our lives temporary but also our planet, our solar system, our galaxy, and indeed, the entire universe as we know it.

As scientists now look far out into the stars, it is apparent that our small blue planet and the life it supports are indeed a rare, if not singular, situation. How fortunate, then, are we to occupy even this tiny bit of space during this tiny bit of time that we are here? In my own mind, this helps me to understand how precious every day is for each of us. However, whether by destiny or circumstance, we each lead our individual lives and

experience this life for varying amounts of time.

I truly believe that the dignity and inherent value of our lives is determined not by our quantity of time, but rather our quality of thought and action. As such, what better legacy could each of us have than to leave the earth a better place than we found it? Few will ever win a Nobel Prize, and yet true nobility remains within the reach of each of us. All it takes to ensure this nobility is kindness, patience, and optimism.

Obviously any serious illness, such as cancer, reminds us in a harsh and scary way of our own mortality, which we tend to forget in the course of our day-to-day lives. While these diseases and their treatment can detract from the physical quality of our lives, they do not change the fact that every day is precious. This is why it is so important for those undergoing cancer treatments, as well as for those whose treatments are behind them — and for that matter, for all of us — to experience love on a daily basis. While this love can certainly come to us, it must also come from us. This love can be directed toward another person, an activity that we cherish, or simply an appreciation of the beauty around us. And I believe that it is this love that makes each day precious.

So in truth, by understanding the blessing each day represents, each of us is doing much more than simply surviving. ■



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