



Acupuncture helps Peggy Dudley get back to the activities she loves.

Game-changing therapy

Acupuncture helps improve quality of life for cancer patients

Peggy Dudley's first bout with breast cancer did not require chemotherapy. But when she was diagnosed again in October 2014, her doctors took a more aggressive approach. Dudley says they got the cancer, but treatment left her with a problem: peripheral neuropathy.



Nancy Lorenzini, MD, licensed medical acupuncturist

Peripheral neuropathy typically involves pain, burning or tingling in the fingers, toes, hands and feet. It can result when chemotherapy damages nerve cells that sense touch, pain or heat.

Dudley says the sensation in her feet was not pain exactly, but a constant numbing, tingly feeling—discomfort

so severe she thought she might have to quit her job. "My feet were killing me, it was just consuming me."

While the nerve damage that causes neuropathy cannot be repaired, medication is often used to manage symptoms. But for Dudley, as for many patients, medication was not the answer.

Then Dudley learned about the new acupuncture program at the Community Cancer Center. "I was interested in it because my brother-in-law in Texas had acupuncture for neck pain and I knew it was beneficial," she explains. "But my insurance here wouldn't cover it." Fortunately for patients at the Community Cancer Center acupuncture is offered as an option for the patient as part of their holistic treatment plan.

Acupuncture is a traditional form of Chinese medicine in which thin needles stimulate pressure points throughout the body. Used in China for centuries, today medical acupuncture is increasingly a vital part of an integrative approach to cancer patient care.

Nancy Lorenzini, MD, a licensed medical acupuncturist who is an independent practitioner at the Community Cancer Center, works in collaboration with the patient's entire health care team to use medical acupuncture to help cancer patients improve their quality of life. She says, "Studies show acupuncture has the potential to manage side effects, from hot flashes to pain, nausea and fatigue."

The only board certified Diplomate of the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture in Iowa, Dr. Lorenzini admits she is something of a pioneer locally particularly in the treatment and care of cancer patients and cancer survivors. In collaboration with St. Luke's Nassif Radiation Center she is currently participating in a clinical trial to determine if acupuncture can improve dry mouth caused by radiation therapy for head and neck cancer.

She's also using medical acupuncture to help patients like Peggy Dudley get relief from peripheral neuropathy. Dr. Lorenzini explains, "Acupuncture can be a game-changer for patients if they can start moving their toes again or if they're not dropping things all the time."

Dudley agrees, noting she's able to enjoy activities again, from shopping trips with her sister to daily walks with her Yorkshire terriers. Both Dr. Lorenzini and Dudley stress acupuncture is not a quick fix. Dudley underwent 15 treatments before experiencing improvement, but says she never got discouraged.

"You have to be patient," Peggy Dudley says with a smile, adding, "I don't know what I would have done if this didn't work. It's helped me tremendously."

To learn more about incorporating acupuncture as part of your holistic care call (319) 558-4876.



Matt Schmitz, Cancer Exercise Specialist

The Helen G. Nassif Community Cancer Center specializes in treating the whole person, not just their cancer. We know physical and mental wellness are important at diagnosis, during

treatment and throughout survivorship. One way we help you help yourself is through exercise and integrative wellness. These programs can relieve treatment-related side effects and improve physical and mental well-being. From meeting with our cancer exercise specialist to developing an individualized program to regaining your strength and fighting fatigue, to the relaxing benefits of meditation, the Community Cancer Center's Wellness Program is here to meet your needs throughout your journey. For more information about classes and integrative medicine, visit our website at communitycancercenter.org/wellness.

Classes offered include:

- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Barre Above
- Beginner Chair Yoga
- Meditation
- Individualized Exercise Programs
- Massage Therapy
- Reflexology
- Art Therapy
- Reiki

All classes are free and available for cancer survivors as well as their support team.