



FOCUS *magazine*



NCS CELEBRATES
YEARS!

TAI CHI FOR BALANCE

SPRING INTO HEALTHY EATING

WITH THESE FUN SEASONAL RECIPES



NebraskaCancer.com

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Dear Reader,

Spring has sprung! Flowers are in full bloom, Mother's Day is right around the corner and there are graduations galore. We hope you are experiencing the little things this season and enjoying a few gatherings with friends and family. This issue is jam-packed full of all things Spring! Take a look at new tasty recipes, learn how to nominate your favorite NCS nurse, celebrate our birthday with us, and read about our new Tai Chi classes.

Don't forget to stop by one of five locations for a drive-thru breakfast in celebration of National Cancer Survivors Day. Details inside the issue.

Enjoy the season and those you love the most. We encourage you to take a breath of fresh air, smell the flowers, let yourself laugh, and celebrate all there is to smile about.

*The Physicians and Staff of
Nebraska Cancer Specialists*



**Listen to our podcast on
[NebraskaCancer.com/podcasts](https://www.NebraskaCancer.com/podcasts)**



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THINK[ing] of YOU.



CONVENIENT COMMUNITY CANCER CARE

Locations TO SERVE YOU

NEBRASKA'S Largest

COMMUNITY-BASED CANCER CARE PROVIDER

Midwest Cancer Center - Legacy

17201 Wright Street, Suite 200, Omaha, NE 68130

Methodist Estabrook Cancer Center

8303 Dodge Street, Suite 250, Omaha, NE 68114

Henry Lynch Cancer Center - Bergan

7500 Mercy Road, Suite 1300, Omaha, NE 68124

Midwest Cancer Center - Papillion

611 Fenwick Drive, Papillion, NE 68046

Methodist Fremont Health

450 East 23rd Street, Fremont, NE 68025

Think Whole Person Healthcare

7100 West Center Road, Omaha, NE 68106

Regional Cancer Center – St Francis – Grand Island

2730 West Faidley Avenue, Grand Island, NE 68803

Landmark Center – Hastings

2727 West 2nd Street, Hastings, NE 68901

*Outreach Clinics

Aurora, Henderson, Superior, and West Point



Spring Tips

FOR YOUR BEST HEALTH



1

Fill Your Plate With Fresh
In-Season Fruits & Vegetables



Reset Your
Sleep Schedule

2

3

Get Some Vitamin D
*Don't forget the sunscreen



Limit Your
Screen Time

4

5

Get Outside
And Get Moving



Stay Hydrated

6

7

Check In
With Your Doctor



Tai Chi for Balance

Health Benefits of Continuous Movements



Tai Chi – a traditional Chinese martial art involving slow and continuous movements that use weight shift, and movement of the arms, legs, and body.

Research has shown that in Americans over the age of 65, one in three will fall each year. Additionally, according to the National Council on Aging, every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall, and every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall. These statistics are staggering for the safety of NCS patients; all the more reason to offer a movement class for assistance and support.



In early 2022, NCS began offering Tai Chi for Balance, a specific program designed to improve balance and gain control. The regular flow of the program creates energy in the body, strengthening one's health. Physical benefits include: better strength and balance, improved sleep patterns, and increased mobility, range of motion, cardiovascular and respiratory functions. Additional benefits include: easier relaxation, improved attention span, stress reduction, pain control, self-motivation, reduced fear of falling, fewer arthritic symptoms, and lowered blood pressure.

"I enjoy teaching this class for many reasons. Not only for personal improvements in my own balance, stress reduction, and sleep quality, but also for observing the class attendees and their progress. Many of the

class participants begin the class with a fear of falling, balance concerns, or simply because they are interested in engaging in regular instructor led exercise. I'm amazed by their dedication to the class, their desire to learn new things, the sense of community they bring to each session, and their improved physical state. Many of them have become friends with one another and look forward to seeing each other," said Kate Spellerberg, Director of Integrative Services and Tai Chi for Balance Certified Instructor.

Tai Chi for Balance is offered two times a week for 60 minutes. This evidence-based fall prevention program is based on 8 therapeutic movements and is designed for all ability levels to be performed seated or standing. It's estimated that this program is shown to reduce falls by 55% if done twice a week for twelve weeks.

"We had a person who was so afraid of falling prior to coming to class. After her first session she felt more mentally confident, stronger, and left feeling relaxed with a reduced fear," said Kate.

Due to the growing interest of the program, NCS is adding another class for those who graduate from the beginners class. Tai Chi for Balance Intermediate will be available for those participants who have graduated from the beginners session and are interested in a continual class combining all 8 movements while incorporating fluid movements and balance.

Tai Chi Class Information

- Classes are available to the community and to anyone who may be interested in trying something new
- Classes are offered twice a week for 60 minutes
- Those interested in signing up for the next session of classes can visit [NebraskaCancer.com/movement](https://www.NebraskaCancer.com/movement)
- Classes begin June 6th at Midwest Cancer Center-Legacy in Omaha

For the Love

DALE AND TONYA EUREK SHARE THEIR

Dale and Tonya Eurek have always been active members in their community, both from small towns in Nebraska and both college athletes.

After meeting in college in Hastings, Nebraska, the couple married and moved to Omaha. Tonya, a teacher in the public schools, and Dale, a customer service representative at a local bank and basketball referee, were eager to start a family. They were blessed with two boys and life was good.

Time quickly passed and as their boys grew older, their lives evolved as parents' lives tend to. Dale changed career paths, which included travel to some interesting places. They spent time at numerous sporting events, moved to an acreage, and even went skydiving. They started a bucket list when they were 42 and were fortunate to attend the March Madness final four games, experience the Kentucky Derby and travel somewhere tropical every summer. Their bucket list continued to grow with hopes of biking across Nebraska, as they both enjoy the outdoors and exercising.

In January of 2021, Dale discovered a lump on his neck while shaving. Not thinking much about it, he mentioned it to his doctor during a wellness check. Due to the nature and size of the lump, his doctor referred him on for a CT scan, ultrasound, and biopsy. On January 29th, 2021, Dale was diagnosed with stage 1 HPV-positive head and neck cancer.

"After noticing the lump and after my tests, I had a feeling it maybe could be cancer. It wasn't until after the conference call from my doctor confirming it was cancer that I had to realize what was really going on," said Dale. "My cancer was at the base of my tongue.

I had one larger node and a few smaller ones, too. My goal was to be recovered and feeling better by my son's wedding. The wedding was scheduled for May 22nd on our acreage and I knew we had a lot to do to get ready for it. I had a lot of mowing to do."

Dale's multidisciplinary medical team consisted of Dr Yungpo Bernard Su, a medical oncologist with Nebraska Cancer Specialists, head and neck surgical oncology, radiation oncology, and a clinical trials research team. Dale's course of treatment was intense. He received 30

radiation treatments, Monday through Friday, paired with six weeks of Cisplatin chemotherapy treatments, usually on Fridays. "I would have radiation in the morning and then chemotherapy. Those were pretty long days," Dale remembers.

"Dale has gone through his journey with courage and grace, heartened by the fact that his prognosis for cure and long-term quality of life is excellent. He and his wife Tonya have been a great team throughout," said Dr. Su.

"My last radiation and chemotherapy treatments concluded approximately two and a half weeks before my son's wedding. Those two weeks were the hardest for me. I had lost about 30 pounds and my energy was really low. It was hard for me to swallow and eat from the radiation burns on my neck and throat," recalls Dale. "But, I'll never forget it. I was sleeping in the spare bedroom and in the middle of the night I heard my wife yelling and screaming."

Dale remembers going to the primary bedroom and noticing that Tonya had fallen.

Tonya had always been active. A runner, weight lifter, and basketball coach, but had noticed throughout a couple months prior to her fall that she was experiencing some rib pain.

"Late last year I remember getting a big bear hug and I felt a pop in my ribs and then the pain kind of moved to my back," said Tonya.

"Then I had been having some pain when I was lifting weights but just thought I had tweaked something."

After a few trips to the chiropractor and a visit to a spine doctor, she was told she had a fracture in her back. One night while feeling more than normal discomfort, she got up and walked to her bathroom. She fell on the floor and remembers hearing things break.

"I was taken to the hospital by ambulance and told I had 15 broken ribs, a couple broken vertebrae, and



The Eureka's were so thankful to celebrate their son's wedding



STORY

sternum. It was terrible, I was in so much pain," recalls Tonya.

On the fourth day of her six-day hospital stay, after a series of tests, Tonya was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, a cancer that forms in a type of white blood cell called a plasma cell. Tonya was referred to Dr. Stefano Tarantolo, a medical oncologist with Nebraska Cancer Specialists, experienced in treating patients with blood cancers.

The first goal of treatment was to get Tonya feeling well enough to attend her son's wedding. A course of steroid treatments allowed for Tonya to feel well enough to be discharged from the hospital and home in time to see her son marry the love of his life. "I was so thankful to our family and friends who rallied around us and helped us get ready for the wedding. They helped with everything. I don't know what I would have done without all of them. The wedding was perfect and we were both there to see it," said Tonya.

Tonya's cancer journey included two forms of chemotherapy from May to October. In October, her stem cells were collected and she underwent a stem cell transplant in November which included a two week hospital stay.

"I won a medal in the hospital for being a marathon walker and walking the floors multiple times a day to get exercise. I also brought my hand weights," said Tonya.

"One of the things I noticed time and time again was how much Dale advocated for Tonya and the support he provided leading up to her stem cell transplant. He was always on top of her medical appointments, sharing concerns they had and any symptoms Tonya was experiencing," said Carly Keene, Nurse Case Manager for Dr. Tarantolo.

Tonya said one hundred days after a stem cell transplant is typically when a patient begins feeling better. For her, that day was in mid-February. Tonya

is happy to be back teaching middle school, which includes 7th and 8th grade students, in Bennington.

Dale and Tonya have decided to stay put in the community that supported them through all of the ups and downs. "We are blessed to have welcomed our first granddaughter, Hunter Wren, in August and we are putting in a pool. We are looking forward to spending the summer here at home with our boys and their families, just being together," said Tonya.

In the midst of Dale's cancer journey, he took to journaling and formed a video blog to keep friends and family up-to-date on his progress. He said he checked a box in his calendar each day and looked forward to the finish line. His advice to others going through something like this is to take it one day at a time. Allow your body to heal and get well. He also credits the support from others who have gone through something similar.

"Dale has gone through his journey with courage and grace, heartened by the fact that his prognosis for cure and long-term quality of life is excellent. He and his wife Tonya have been a great team throughout", said Dr Su.

"There was another man about 10 years older than me going through the same treatment. It was just great to talk to someone who was going through something similar," said Dale.

Dale and Tonya are happy to be back doing what they love, in a community they love, with the people they love. "Both of us are feeling good today," said Tonya. "We feel so lucky and blessed to have a second chance at life. We are planning a trip to Jamaica for this summer. My bones feel better every day and I've been working out, walking, and keeping busy."

To view Dale's video journey, check him out on YouTube. Visit YouTube and search Dale Eureka. •





Since its inception, NCS has grown to become the region's largest community oncology practice with plans for continued growth and expansion.

NCS was first formed by Dr. Robert Langdon and Dr. Margaret Block in 1992 with their first clinic located in the Clock Tower building off of 93rd and Dodge Street in Omaha. The clinic quickly grew with the addition of Dr. Peter Townley, emeritus, and Dr. David Silverberg. By 1994 the four providers were treating patients at Methodist Estabrook Cancer Center, Bergan Mercy Medical Center and Midlands Cancer Center in Papillion.

In 1997, NCS joined forces with Dr. Haroon and began treating patients in Fremont. In 2010, NCS began building the Midwest Cancer Center – Legacy, a premier west Omaha oncology clinic conveniently located near 172nd and West Center Road. NCS Legacy is now the primary location for research, theranostics, integrative services, imaging, and is one of the most visited clinics for treatment. Other providers have joined throughout the years leading to NCS becoming the largest community oncology practice in the region.

“We have always been dedicated to putting the patient first. We were fortunate to grow in the community and continue providing the same exceptional care today,” said Dr. Robert Langdon.

Last summer marked the latest expansion of NCS with two new locations in central Nebraska and six new providers joining the team. This expansion brought much needed research, treatment, and access to compassionate care to the central and western part of the state. A second NCS clinic in Grand Island is set to open this summer in the Grand Island Regional Medical Center.

As of today, NCS proudly employs nearly 300 dedicated oncology experts in eight, soon to be nine, locations across the state with additional outreach in rural areas. By remaining a private community oncology practice, patients are fortunate to receive care in a convenient outpatient setting with lower cost treatment options, and are cared for by providers whose time is spent in direct patient care.

“I’m proud of how far we have come. I’m proud of what we have been able to do in the community and for the patients who need us the most. I feel honored to be a part of NCS and look forward to remaining independent, staying up-to-date on the continuous changing landscape of the industry, and delivering research and care in the Midwest,” said Dr. Margaret Block.

NCS will be celebrating the entire month of May with events for employees and patients. “We are grateful for the wonderful patients, staff, and communities we serve and we are proud to call Nebraska home. We are looking forward to giving back through service and appreciation and are forever thankful for those who have helped us get to celebrate 30 great years,” said Kelly Horn, Director of Marketing and Community Outreach.

NATIONAL CANCER
SURVIVORS DAY



DRIVE
THRU
Breakfast



In celebration of National Cancer Survivors Day, we invite the community to a free drive-thru breakfast on Friday, June 3rd from 7:30 AM – 9:30 AM at five convenient locations.

- **Midwest Cancer Center-Legacy**
17201 Wright Street
Omaha, NE 68130
- **Shadow Lake Towne Center**
7775 Olson Drive
Papillion, NE 68046
- **Think Whole Person Healthcare**
7100 West Center Road
Omaha, NE 68106
- **Grand Island Regional Medical Center**
3533 Prairieview Street
Grand Island, NE 68803
- **Methodist Fremont Health**
450 E 23rd Street
Fremont, NE 68025

Anyone living with a history of cancer, from the moment of diagnosis through the remainder of life, is a cancer survivor as defined by the National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation. All survivors, family members, friends, caregivers, colleagues, neighbors, healthcare professionals – the entire community, is welcome to join us in celebration.

In addition to a free breakfast sandwich, individuals will also receive information regarding cancer prevention, research, integrative services, and a goodie bag.

For questions about the event, please call 402.334.4773 or visit NebraskaCancer.com/breakfast.

Would you like to thank your nurse?

Share your story of compassionate and skillful nursing care.

Scan the QR code from your smart phone camera or type in the website address to access the online nomination form.

NebraskaCancer.com/daisyaward



NEBRASKA
CANCER
SPECIALISTS



SEASONAL Allergies

GETTING THE BEST

AH-CHOO?

It's that time of year when many people begin suffering from pollen overload, wreaking havoc on allergy sufferers. While you're not alone, it's estimated that more than 50 million Americans suffer from seasonal allergies each year. Unfortunately for some, this can put a damper on enjoying the outdoors and staying active – but there is hope.

What are seasonal allergies?

Outdoor allergies, often referred to as seasonal allergies because they change with the seasons, are caused by an overreaction of the immune system to ordinarily harmless allergens found outside.

In Nebraska, predictable symptoms of allergies include sneezing, watery eyes, itchy throat and skin and sudden congestion. Symptoms can be caused by mold spores, tree, grass, and weed pollens, ragweed and perennial allergens such as dust mites. Often times these symptoms can last from March until the first freeze of Fall.

Luckily, allergy sufferers can manage their symptoms by taking precautions.

Over-the-counter allergy medicines such as antihistamines, nasal steroid sprays and decongestants taken before trees begin budding can minimize sneezing and runny noses. Other remedies such as nasal salt water rinses and acupuncture have been known to help.

Talk to your doctor before trying alternative treatments.

When home remedies aren't enough, don't give up.

Doctor prescribed allergy shots, sprays, or medications can be a good option for some. Further testing such as skin tests and/or blood tests can help identify exact allergens that trigger your specific symptoms. If your symptoms persist, schedule an appointment with your primary care doctor for further assessment.

How to Nip Those Allergies in the Bud

- *Keep windows closed to avoid pollens from getting indoors*
- *Wash your hands, skin, hair, clothing and pets after being outdoors*
- *Stay away from blowing dirt and weed pollens in yards and construction sites*
- *Use a dehumidifier during humid seasons*
- *Avoid outdoor activities when the pollen count is high*
- *Clean floors, furniture, bedding & window coverings more often in the Spring and Fall*
- *Use a HEPA filter in household vacuums*



INCS CONNECTS

NCS CONNECTS BRINGS CURRENT AND FORMER PATIENTS TOGETHER FOR SUPPORT

NCS Connects is a peer mentoring program designed to empower newly diagnosed cancer patients by partnering them with current or former cancer patients who can provide insight on their own cancer experience.

Peer Mentors are volunteer role models who may provide understanding and encouragement, compassionate listening, suggestions of questions for the medical team, and serve as a source for reasoning out decisions.

Participants are matched based on several factors including cancer type, treatment, gender requests, language needs, and communication preference.

The NCS Connects team is excited to assist in developing peer mentoring relationships.

If you have additional questions or would like more information, please email our NCS team at: NCSCONnects@NebraskaCancer.com



Become a Mentor
NebraskaCancer.com/connect



Volunteer Spotlight:

“You Are Stronger Than You Know!”

DR. MARINA HEDLUND SHARES HER VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE WITH NCS

How long have you participated in the NCS volunteer program?

I have been a volunteer for a year now at the Legacy location.

What does a typical volunteer day look like to you?

The first thing I do when I arrive is check the blanket warmer. I make sure that it is stocked so that we have plenty of warm ones to go around when patients arrive. The blankets are a hot commodity! I also make sure the snack tray, refrigerator, and coffee area is stocked and tidy. When patients arrive I help them get settled in a recliner and will grab them a blanket, coffee or whatever they may need to be as comfortable as possible.

What is your favorite part about volunteering for NCS?

My favorite part is when patients want to chat. I love getting to know patients and hearing their stories. I have had wonderful conversations over the past year.

Do you have a message you would like to share with others?

While this journey is not something you envisioned for yourself, you are stronger than you know.

When did you decide it was a good time for you personally to begin volunteering?

I had tried a few volunteering opportunities shortly after finishing my cancer treatment. It was difficult for me personally so soon after my own journey. Last year I found myself with some extra time on my hands and I had also come across the opportunity to volunteer at NCS. Due to various policies surrounding Covid, I wanted to do what I could to give patients a helping hand and conversation while receiving treatment.

“ I love getting to know patients and hearing their stories. I have had wonderful conversations over the past year.”



Dr. Marina Hedlund
Photo Courtesy of Nate Olsen



**Are you interested in volunteering at NCS?
Visit NCSHopefoundation.org to apply!**

GINGER PINK LEMONADE

2 1/2 cups water
1 inch piece fresh ginger, peeled
2 Tbsp. agave nectar*
3/4 cup sliced raspberries or strawberries
(fresh or frozen)
3/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
(6 medium lemons)

Makes 4 servings (1 cup)
Calories per serving: 50

Directions

Place water, ginger, agave nectar, berries and lemon juice in the container of a blender. Process for a few seconds until smooth. Transfer to a pitcher and store in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Serve over ice.

*Notes

May substitute honey or maple syrup.



SUMMER LASAGNA



Makes 12 servings
Calories per serving: 360

2 eggplants (about 3 lbs.), quartered lengthwise
6 medium zucchinis (about 3 lbs.)
Canola oil cooking spray
15 oz. low-fat ricotta or low-fat cottage cheese
(or a combination of both)
2 eggs
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
4 cups low-sodium tomato sauce
1 lb. whole-wheat, no-boil lasagna noodles
3 cups part-skim mozzarella cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
Grease a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan, set aside.

Slice the eggplant and zucchini in 1/2-inch slices. Layer on two baking sheets and coat both sides of the vegetables with cooking spray. Roast for 40 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees F. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, mix together the ricotta and/or cottage cheeses, eggs, Parmesan, nutmeg and garlic powder.

To assemble: spread a thin layer of sauce over the bottom of the prepared pan. Cover with a layer of pasta. Spread 1/3 of the ricotta mixture on top of pasta. Sprinkle 1/4 of the mozzarella over the ricotta. Spoon 1/3 of the roasted vegetables on top. Top with 1/2 cup of tomato sauce and continue the assembly as directed until you have 4 layers of pasta and 3 layers of filling. Spread the remaining sauce on top and sprinkle with the remaining mozzarella cheese.

Cover the pan with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and continue to bake until golden and bubbly, about 15 minutes more. Let stand for 15 minutes before serving.

SEARED ROMAINE AND CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD

Chicken Marinade

1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1/4 tsp. kosher salt
A few pinches black pepper
1 pound chicken tenders

Salad

3 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 romaine hearts, sliced in half lengthwise
A few generous pinches kosher salt and ground black pepper
4 small tomatoes, each cut into 4 wedges
1 cup thinly sliced English cucumber or 1/2 English cucumber
1 Tbsp. Caesar salad dressing
4 lemon wedges, optional
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, optional

Makes 4 servings (240g)
Calories per serving: 240

Recipes Courtesy of The American
Institute for Cancer Research

Directions

For marinade, place olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, oregano, salt and pepper in small bowl and stir to combine. Place chicken in large, resealable plastic bag. Pour marinade over chicken. Remove air from bag and seal. Place in refrigerator and allow chicken to marinate for a minimum of 1 hour or as long as overnight.

To sear chicken, heat 1 teaspoon of oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook chicken until cooked through and golden on the outside, 3 to 4 minutes per side. (Adjust cook time for thicker pieces.) Remove to a plate and cover lightly with aluminum foil.

Brush remaining 2 teaspoons oil over both sides of each romaine heart. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

In the same large nonstick skillet, cook two romaine halves over medium heat until lightly charred, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Transfer to large serving platter. Repeat with remaining romaine. Arrange chicken, tomatoes and cucumber around charred romaine. Drizzle dressing over lettuce and serve with lemon wedges and Parmesan cheese, if desired.

Notes

If you're looking for other protein options, try shrimp, salmon or chickpeas. Other vegetable options include avocado, bell peppers, and red onion.

Save the Date!

National Cancer Survivors Day Drive-Thru Breakfast • All Are Welcome



**Friday, June 3rd
7:30 AM – 9:30 AM**

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