

# **NCS** online



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**Editor-in-Chief:** Kelly Horn

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**Writers**: Kelly Horn Dear Reader,

With the leaves changing and the arrival of the holidays, I hope you are getting cozy and cuddling up in preparation for all that the next season brings us. This issue of Focus features a brave survivor embarking on a new type of cancer treatment. He's sharing his story and his love for family and adventure.

We're in the kitchen again and this time mixing up some fun ideas for your holiday menus. We've also highlighted how to get the little ones in your life helping out in ways that are age friendly.

As always, remember to make time for yourself. Check out the holiday self-care wish list for some simple ways to stay calm and happy this season.

Lastly, as you consider plans for your annual giving this year, consider giving to the NCS HOPE Foundation. 100% of your donation goes to provide assistance to cancer patients and their families in our communities. For more information on giving, volunteering, or applying for assistance visit *NCSHOPEFoundation.org*.

Until next time, stay warm, hug those important to you tightly, and enjoy the moment.

Kelly

Kelly Horn
Director of Marketing & Community Outreach

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NebraskaCancer.com

# WHAT'S Trending AT NCS...



GET FLU YOUR SHOT

REASONS
YOU SHOULD
GET ONE!

**1** FEWER SICK DAYS

It protects you against the flu and lessens the severity if you do catch it.

SAVES YOU MONEY

Avoid a flu-associated hospital or doctor visit.

PREGNANCY PROTECTION

Flu shots protect the mother and baby several months after birth.

4 HELP THOSE WITH HEALTH ISSUES

The chance of flu-related complications for those with cardiac conditions, diabetes or chronic lung disease are lessened.

Even if you don't have symptoms, the virus can still be contagious.

A second Digni-Cap machine was added to NCS clinics and is now available at the Legacy location. DigniCap is a cooling treatment used to reduce chemotherapy-induced hair loss. The DigniCap Scalp Cooling System minimizes hair loss from certain chemotherapy treatments for men and women with solid tumor cancers such as breast, prostate, ovarian, uterine, and other tissues.

Prescription medication, nutrition, bill pay and transportation assistance is available throughout the area. Visit *NebraskaCancer.com/resources* for resources close to you.

New guidelines suggest consulting with an occupational therapist *prior* to surgery and cancer treatment to assess range of motion, balance, and cognitive ability. The NCS Prehabilitation program creates a customized plan that details athome exercises, an occupational therapy schedule and post-surgery and treatment options. Talk to your medical oncology care team about scheduling your consultation.

NCS coined the month of October as "Dot-Tober" featuring a series of topics relating to early detection, cancer screenings, integrative resources, and peer mentoring. The animated mascot, Dot, continues to bring valuable information to patients about community oncology and cancer awareness. Meet Dot now by scanning the QR Code below!



# MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE

# WITH THE NEXT GENERATION OF TREATMENT FOR PROSTATE CANCER

Lucky Seyler has a knack for adventure. He and his wife Karen have six daughters, 21 grandkids and 13 "great grands". And if that isn't enough of an adventure in itself, he also enjoys the outdoors, watching his grandkids play sports, and is always up for an opportunity to hit the road in his RV. In 2006, when Lucky was first diagnosed with prostate cancer, he decided it couldn't set him back, and that adventure was calling him again.

"I was diagnosed when we were living in eastern Kansas in 2006. After my biopsy came back with cancer in all twelve of the samples and in some lymph nodes, we had a decision to make. My wife Karen and I decided if my prostate was full of cancer it was best to have it removed immediately. My urologist at the time performed a Prostatectomy (the removal of the prostate), and prescribed a hormone therapy pill that I took every day, and an injection I had every six months," said Lucky.

Two years ago, after Lucky and his family had moved to Aurora, Nebraska, he was referred to Nebraska Cancer Specialists' Medical Oncologist, Dr. Crockett. The marker in Lucky's blood that demonstrated the degree of prostate cancer had significantly increased and scans had indicated his cancer had spread.

"When I first met Lucky, I knew right away he was a kind and caring person. If the saying goes that cancer seems to affect the nicest people, he would certainly be one to prove that rule," said NCS Medical Oncologist, Dr. David Crockett.

# **Time for Something More**

Lucky received the standard treatment of care for his prostate cancer, yet the marker in his blood continued to rise and despite all of the efforts his cancer continued to progress. After exhausting the standard treatments for his cancer, he was referred by Dr. Crockett to the NCS Theranostics Center and the team lead by Nebraska Cancer Specialists' Sam

Mehr, MD, Nuclear Oncology Physician, and Scott Degenhardt, NMAA, Director of Nuclear Medicine.

## **New Generation of Treatment**

The NCS Theranostics Center is the first of its kind in the region. It consists of a team of professionals including a nuclear oncologist, pharmacists, technologists, registered nurses and a director of the program.

Theranostics is the next generation of treatment for cancer, relatively new to the United States, which describes using the combination of one radioactive drug to diagnose (nostics) and a second to deliver a specific targeted therapy (thera) based upon the initial targeted test. The diagnostic component determines and defines the type and extent of the cancer, which allows decisions to be made on the timing,

"I feel fortunate to be one of the first people in Nebraska receiving the treatment."

quantity, type of drugs, and choice of treatment options. The therapy component focuses on individualizing treatment by targeting therapy to an individual's specific cancer and administering the therapeutic agent to targeted tumors, which allows for higher doses administered safely to the patient without significant exposure to normal tissues.

"This treatment utilizes a chemical that uniquely goes to the surface of a cancer cell. After it goes to the cell, it is drawn inside the cell where the tumor's DNA is located. Attached to that substance is a radioactive particle. The particle is carried into the tumor's DNA where it damages and destroys the tumors cells ability to do harm," said Dr. Sam Mehr, MD.

The theranostics treatment is administrated

through a vein and circulated throughout the entire body. It is drawn to the tumor cells as iron filings are drawn to a magnet.

Even though this treatment is given much like conventional chemotherapy, the treatment is designed to kill the cells in the tumor rather than shrink or eliminate it. The side effects are few and generally easily tolerated by a patient. "The goal of the treatment is to convert a potentially life threatening cancer into a chronic illness that is managed throughout the patient's life. Much like diabetes, arthritis, and certain types of heart disease, said Dr. Sam Mehr."

One of the unique benefits of receiving theranostics at NCS, is the added level of care from the nuclear medicine team in addition to the medical oncology team. The collaboration between the providers and care teams provide substantial attention to detail, dedication to the

generation of well-tolerated cancer care right here in Nebraska," said Dr. Crockett.

#### The Next Adventure

Among some of the next adventures for Lucky include traveling to watch his grandsons play football and baseball and his granddaughter perform in gymnastics.

When asked what's next, Lucky smiled and said, "we have a very close family and we enjoy getting together. It doesn't always have to be a big planned event. Some of our best memories come from the impromptu get-togethers, burgers on the grill, and camping trips."

"During this whole ordeal, it became very abundantly clear to us that this was the route we should take. With 21 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren, we have a lot of living to do," said Lucky's wife, Karen.



Photo credit: Miranda Helmuth Photography

patient, and one-to-one care from both teams.

Lucky is one of the first patients in Nebraska to receive the theranostics treatment for his prostate cancer. Adults with prostate, neuroendocrine, and thyroid cancer tumors are among the first patients to benefit from theranostics. The next anticipated treatment will be for breast and lung cancer patients.

"I feel fortunate to be one of the first people in Nebraska receiving the treatment. For the most part I feel pretty good. I've had very little nausea or other side effects with this treatment, said Lucky.

"I feel good about Lucky's current treatment and pleased that we are able to give him the next NCS is bringing Theranostics to central Nebraska beginning this fall. The theranostics team will travel to Grand Island to bring the treatments to the patients in area. "We remain committed to our mission which is to deliver personalized, comprehensive cancer care while respecting the values and needs of each patient. This includes being where the patients are and when they need us the most," said Danielle Geiger, NCS Practice Administrator.

For more information on the theranostics center or to learn more about the treatment visit, NebraskaCancer.com/nuclear-oncology.

# A Holiday Self-Care Wish List



Putting your health and wellbeing on your "to do" list doesn't have to be difficult or time consuming. Boost your personal wellness by consistently doing these simple things:

- Taking a few deep, centering breaths throughout the day.
- Have realistic expectations for yourself and for others.
- Forgive yourself, say good-bye to guilt, and make healthy choices.
- Simplify things. The sun will come up tomorrow if you make one less dish, buy fewer presents, or use a mix instead of making something from scratch.
- Get enough sleep. Being well rested is a necessity not a luxury.
- Create new, self-supportive traditions. For example, if you don't feel like cooking or hosting a big dinner, make reservations at your favorite restaurant instead.
- Decide what this season means for you and focus on what's important.
- Keep easy, healthy stress management tools nearby. Some ideas: A journal so you can write about your thoughts and feelings, your favorite music so you can dance or sing to work off tension, some funny cartoons. Laughter really is great medicine.
- ✓ Take a quiet walk.

# What you need to know about

# **Cancer Screening Tests**



# **BREAST CANCER**

It's important to know if you are at a higher than usual risk for breast cancer. If you are, talk to your healthcare provider about when to begin breast cancer screenings and if genetic testing is right for you. Beginning at age 40, women can began annual breast cancer screenings with mammograms.



# **COLON CANCER**

Find out if you are at a higher than average risk for colon cancer due to family history, genetic disorders or other factors. If you are at an increased risk, talk to your healthcare provider about when to begin screening and what tests are right for you. Individuals at an average risk should begin testing at age 45. Screening tests can vary, so talk with your healthcare provider about what's right for you.



# **LUNG CANCER**

Yearly lung cancer screenings are suggested if you have a history of smoking, smoke now, or have quit smoking within the last 15 years, and you are between the ages of 50 and 80.



#### PROSTATE CANCER

Beginning at age 50, men should discuss with their healthcare provider about the pros and cons of testing in order to determine the right choice for them. If a family history of prostate cancer diagnosed before the age of 65 exists, discuss with a healthcare provider starting at age 45.



# **CERVICAL CANCER**

At age 25, and if you have a cervix, you can have a Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) test every 5 years, or a Pap test every 3 years. If your cervix has been removed due to surgery, as long as it was for reasons not related to cervical cancer or pre-cancer, no testing is necessary.

Individuals with a history of pre-cancer should continue testing for 25 years after diagnosis.



Nurse Case Manager Machele, Todd and Deb Banchor

# NCS NURSE CASE MANAGER HONORED WITH DAISY AWARD

When Machele graduated from high school, she remembers standing in the kitchen one day with her mom saying, "I don't know what I want to be when I grow up," My mom said, "well, you're so caring, and so nurturing, you're good in an emergency situation, why don't you go to nursing school?"

She took her mom's advice. While taking classes for her nursing degree, she worked as a home health nurse and was a mom to her young children at the time. Machele graduated college with a degree in nursing from Briar Cliff College in Sioux City. She later worked in a chiropractor's office for 10 years, as a volunteer

ambulance director in her small town, and started a congestive heart failure program at a cardiology clinic where she wrote a teaching manual for heart patients. Machele joined NCS as a nurse case manager in 2017. She quickly learned oncology and to many of her patients and co-workers she is known as a true friend.

# Going the extra mile

Machele was nominated for the DAISY award by Todd Banchor, who considered Machele a Godsend for going the extra mile as his nurse. "Machele is the consummate top notch nurse. She is very efficient professional personable knowledgeable and goes the extra mile to get answers to questions. Machele always finds a way to establish rapport to the point where she knows our family and asks about our family events. She got to really know us and that lets us know that she cares. She is ready with a hug, a smile, and insightful questions whenever she sees us. There was an event in which we were awaiting the results of a critical scan, she called us at home at night and showed so much compassion," said Todd, NCS patient. "There was another time that I was out of town and had a minor infection. We called her to see if we should be concerned or what we should/ should not do. She was quickly in touch with us letting us know what to do in a very caring manner. We were able to proceed with our vacation in comfort. Machele is a Godsend in our journey with cancer and we are very thankful for her," he added.

# "I'm your quarterback"

When I first met Todd, who nominated me, he and his wife, Deb, were so scared. I could tell they were terrified with Todd's diagnosis," said Machele.

After the physician was finished with the discussion about Todd's diagnosis to the family, Machele visited him in his exam room.

"I told Todd that we will help him. I made it my goal to help him. I told him that I'm his quarterback now and that I'm fighting for him, for his wife, and for his kids. I remember him sitting there and after we spoke his shoulders relaxed and I could tell our conversation resonated with him," she said.

Machele added, "I tell all of my patients that I am their quarterback. Every one of them. I am their advocate. I'm here for any questions whether it's, 'where is my next scan



appointment?' or 'I'm feeling really sick and I don't know what to do.' I'm here for them."

Machele's mom was right, nursing was Machele's calling. At NCS we are fortunate to have Machele as part of the nurse case manager care team. Machele is currently on Dr. Kirsten Leu's team along with a medical assistant and a patient care coordinator.

Machele lives out the mission at NCS every day, to serve the community by providing personalized comprehensive cancer care while respecting the values and needs of each patient. Machele's compassion and dedication to patients is felt in every interaction. "She keeps patients and their needs at the center of everything she does and will do anything if it will help the patient," said Annie Rudloff, NCS Director of Nursing.



Machele was honored to receive the first ever DAISY award presented by NCS. She has been the recipient of many other recognitions throughout the years as well including The Meaning of Care Award, nominated by a patient and presented by Methodist Health System, Employee of the Year, three years in a row at her home health position and Employee of the Month three times at NCS. However, Machele said the biggest award she has received is being able to feel the satisfaction she feels when she is able to help a person in need. Machele added, "I love caring for people and caring for my patients, I really truly do. It's just who I am."

You can learn more about
The DAISY Foundation or
nominate an NCS nurse by visiting
NebraskaCancer.com/daisyaward

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





How long have you been volunteering for Nebraska Cancer Specialists (NCS)?

I have been volunteering since February of 2022.

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

I am a cancer survivor and I wanted to give back.

# What does a typical volunteer day look like to you?

My main duties are to support the staff and the patients they care for. I also make sure the warm blankets, refreshments, and supplies are stocked when I get there and when I leave.

# What is your favorite part about volunteering at NCS?

What I can give can help make someone's day better. Hopefully I can bring a smile to the people I serve.

# Why do you continue being part of the NCS volunteer program?

I like the staff and patients and feel like I am part of the team.

# Do you have a message to share with others?

Stay positive and be thankful for all you have.

Are you interested in volunteering at NCS? To apply, visit NCSHopefoundation.org

# NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS OPENS NEW CANCER CENTER IN GRAND ISLAND REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Nebraska Cancer Specialists (NCS) began providing care to patients in a new clinic located at the Grand Island Regional Medical Center on August 1st, 2022. This marks the third NCS cancer center opening since 2021 in the Grand Island area, focusing on diagnosis, treatment, and research.

The 5,000 square foot location is a full-service treatment center including exam rooms, infusion suite, pharmacy, genetics counseling, clinical trials, and volunteer opportunities.

The board-certified medical oncologists and hematologists, Dr. Ryan Ramaekers, Dr. David Crockett, Dr. Pornchai Jonglertham, and Dr. Sarah Creamer will continue to provide care and services out of the CHI Health Regional Cancer Center on the CHI Health St. Francis campus, as well as in their existing cancer center in the Hastings Landmark Center.

The physician teams will rotate between the three clinics in an effort to serve patients where they are.

"We are excited about the new location which allows us additional flexibility in serving our patients and referring providers from any facility in central Nebraska. We look forward to continuing to provide exceptional medical oncology care to our current and future patient," said Dr. Ramaekers.

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Nebraska Cancer Specialists currently has locations throughout Omaha, in Papillion and Fremont, with outreach locations in Aurora, Henderson, Superior and West Point.

"Our independent practice model has allowed us to provide care in a wide variety of settings over the years and has allowed us to adapt to the needs of our patients and colleagues," said Dr. Robert Langdon, NCS President.

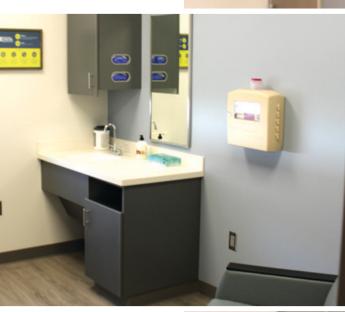
The location in the Grand Island Regional Medical Center is yet another way Nebraska Cancer Specialists is growing to meet the needs of patients and families across the state. The focus has always been to offer patients compassionate and cutting-edge care in a convenient outpatient setting. This philosophy of care resonates well with the Grand Island area community and throughout the region.

The new cancer center is located at 3563 Prairieview Street, Suite 240 Grand Island, Nebraska 68803.











Middle: Private exam room. Bottom: Convenience bar. Right: Reception desk.

Shown at left: Dr. David Crockett, Dr. Sarah Creamer, Dr. Ryan Ramaekers, and Dr. Pornchai Jonglertham.





For many families, the kitchen is where the memories are made, traditions are started, and stories are told. Cooking can be a fun activity for all ages, even for the littlest of helpers.

Putting together a meal is a major accomplishment in the lives of busy families today. Invite the little ones in your life to help with menu planning, grocery ordering, table setting, cooking, and clean up.

Sit down with your kids and look through recipes online or in cookbooks that look appealing. Encourage them to pick their favorites based on the pictures and ingredients. A recipe with 5-7 ingredients is a good starting point for new learners, both young and mature.

Next, teach your junior chef how to buy the groceries for their chosen recipes. For some that means adding items to an online grocery order, for others a trip to the store is needed. Either way, the act of picking out items to purchase teaches organizational skills, simple budgeting, and preparation.

Once you have the items to prepare your meal, it's time to get cooking! Depending on the child's age, there are a variety of ways they can help out such as collecting items from the pantry and refrigerator, washing vegetables, measuring dry ingredients and breaking eggs.

Table setting is also encouraged as a helpful kitchen task. Show your kids how one place setting sits on the table and where the items go. Suggest to them they put the other place settings on the table. Their efforts do not have to be perfect and it's important to let them know this.

Once the menu items are purchased, dinner is made, and the table it set, it's time to enjoy your meal. Begin with a blessing, introduce proper etiquette, show your dinner guests how to pass, and discuss proper table conversation. Most importantly have fun!

Cleaning up should be a breeze with your extra helpers. Teach the kids how to clear the table, rinse off dishes, load the dishwasher and put away extra food and condiments.

Welcome your kids or grandkids into your kitchen this season and begin instilling creativity, safety techniques, confidence, healthy relationships with food, reading and math skills, and other lifelong lessons. Enjoy making new memories, trying out new recipes, and cherishing these moments together.

# SWEET SOMETHINGS FOR ALL AGES

# **3 YEAR OLDS**

- Spread soft spreads such as peanut butter
- Mix ingredients by hand
- Clear their plate at the table

# **4 YEAR OLDS**

- Peel oranges
- Mash bananas
- Set the table
- Stir ingredients
- Unload the dishwasher

# 5-7 YEAR OLDS

- Measure ingredients
- Break eggs into a bowl
- Set a timer
- Collect ingredients from the pantry, freezer, and refrigerator

# 8-10 YEAR OLDS

- Preheat the oven
- Use the microwave
- Cut, peel, slice or dice with a dull utensil
- Use a toaster
- Make a pan of brownies or other favorite recipe with supervision

"When we teach, we love."

- Bill Snyder



# Recipes for Your Holiday Menu CROCK POT MASHED POTATO BAR

#### **Directions**

Peel and cut potatoes into 1-inch chunks.

Place the cut potatoes into the bottom of a 6-quart crock pot.

Dab the potatoes with 1 stick of cubed butter.

Pour chicken broth on top of potatoes.

Cover and cook on high for 4-5 hours.

Potatoes are ready when fork tender.

Carefully drain the excess broth from the cooked potatoes.

Place back into the crock pot.

Mash the potatoes with a potato masher until smooth (or leave a little lumpy if that is your preference). Season with salt and pepper.

Add in remaining stick of cubed butter, cream cheese and milk. Mash together until combined. Add more milk if needed until it gets to a consistency you prefer. Cover and keep potatoes on the warm setting until ready to serve.

Serve in individual ramekins, martini glasses, or mini dessert bowls.

#### **Potatoes**

5 lb. russet potatoes
1 cup salted butter, cut into cubes
32 oz carton chicken broth
8 oz package cream cheese,
softened cut into cubes
½ cup milk
Salt and pepper

# **Suggested Toppings**

- Gravy
- Butter
- Sour cream
- Salt and Pepper
- Bacon bits
- · Shredded cheese
- Chopped chives
- Green onions
- · Ranch dressing
- · Broccoli florets (cooked)
- Cheese sauce



1/2 cup unsalted butter softened
1 cup granulated sugar
21/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 large eggs
1/2 cup sour cream
1/4 cup whole milk
13/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/3 cup holiday sprinkles

# lcing

1¼ cups powdered sugar2 tablespoons heavy cream1 teaspoon vanilla extract

# **HOLIDAY CONFETTI BREAD**

## **Directions**

Preheat the oven to 350°F and spray a 9×5-inch loaf pan with non-stick cooking spray; set aside.

In a large bowl with a hand mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add in the eggs and vanilla and mix just until combined then mix in the sour cream and milk until incorporated; set aside. In a separate large bowl whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Add the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and stir in until just combined and no flour streaks remain.

Lastly, fold in the sprinkles but do not overmix them or they could bleed into the batter. Spread into the prepared loaf pan and bake for about 60 to 70 minutes or until a toothpick comes clean from the center and the top is just golden. Remove from the oven and cool in the pan for 5 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Meanwhile, make the glaze by whisking together the powdered sugar, heavy cream, and vanilla. Spread the icing over the cooled bread and smooth out with a rubber spatula.

Sprinkle with extra sprinkles, if desired. Let set, then slice and serve.

# PEANUT BUTTER YOGURT DIP

1 cup plain greek yogurt

1/3 cup creamy peanut butter

1-2 tablespoons honey or maple syrup

Cinnamon – optional

#### **Directions**

Place the greek yogurt, peanut butter, and honey or maple syrup in a bowl. Mix the ingredients together until they are well combined. Place in a bowl and garnish with a splash of cinnamon if desired.

Serve with your favorite fruits and crackers. Enjoy!





Midwest Cancer Center - Legacy 17201 Wright Street, Suite 200 Omaha, NE 68130

Are you looking for an opportunity to provide state of the art care all while establishing a career with the power to change lives?

Do you thrive on making an impact in your community?

Do you believe in the power of a team?

I love my job here and hope I make a difference in each patient's day when they come in.

Ann M., Patient Care Coordinator

I have never in my life worked for such an amazing, wonderful company. My co-workers feel like family and I have only been a part of NCS for a little while. Thank you for making us feel like we matter.

Stacey S., Nurse Case Manager

With NCS, there is stability and room for growth. I also have work life balance and it's nice to be able to have that time at home.

Jenna K., Medical Assistant

The best thing about NCS is the people. We all work together. You'll never find a better group of physicians to work for.

Rosie I., Training and Events Coordinator

I feel like I'm really fortunate to be at NCS because when I reflect on my career, I don't feel stressed or feel like it's just a job. I'm really proud of where I work.

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