

INhealth

Genetic testing and counseling help guide decisions for breast cancer treatment

PAGE 6

Taking **CHARGE**

Nicole Sharabi, diagnosed with cancer last year, took steps based on genetic testing results and medical advice.

INSIDE: UNNEEDED MEDS

2

PANCREATIC CANCER HELP

4

VICTORY FOR TRIATHLETE

5

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Striving to Be the Best

Patient safety and quality have always been at the heart of the work we do at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital (IFOH). Day in and day out, our dedicated and professional staff strive to make this the safest health-care environment for our patients through excellence, innovation and compassion.

While we don't do what we do for the awards, several highly respected organizations have taken notice of our efforts! IFOH recently received five out of five stars — a perfect score — for quality from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an independent government agency. We, along with two other Inova facilities, Inova Fairfax Medical Campus and Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, are the first and only hospitals in the DC metro area to be awarded five stars (see page 3 for more information).

In addition, The Leapfrog Group, a national patient safety organization, has given us an "A" rating for patient safety. The trend of receiving good grades continues, as IFOH has received straight "A's" since 2012. We continue to keep your safety and experience in our sights, and we are honored to serve this community. Here's to a happy and healthy spring!



JOHN FITZGERALD
Chief Executive Officer
Inova Fair Oaks Hospital



● MEDICATION |

At Your DISPOSAL

Prescription Take Back Program aims to prevent medication misuse

In another step to help curb the opioid epidemic in the community, Inova Fair Oaks Hospital (IFOH) has started a Prescription Take Back Program.

People can now bring all their unneeded prescription and over-the-counter medications to IFOH. (See more about what can and can't be taken back below.) The disposal box, which is available for the unused medications any time of day, is located outside the retail pharmacy on the first floor of the main hospital across from the gift shop.

"We've had the need for a very long time," says Cathleen Cowden, Regional Director of Pharmacy Services at IFOH, who first proposed the idea of the program to the administration. "Twice a year the Drug Enforcement Agency works a take-back day ... however, we want to make it more readily accessible for patients."

Prescription opioid misuse and abuse has been a problem throughout the United States and locally. In 2016, of the more than 100 drug overdose deaths in Fairfax County, 80 were opioid-related. Besides the Take Back Program, the IFOH Emergency Department (ED) has created an Opioid Safety Initiative Committee, which is designed to scale back the use of opioid orders in the ED.

Cowden points out that in addition to preventing opioid addiction, it's important to discard old prescriptions if they are no longer needed to prevent medication errors. And over-the-counter medications that have been in cabinets for a while pose a health hazard to toddlers and other family members. Moreover, the program helps keep unneeded medications out of the waterways.

All the drugs being disposed of must be placed in a sealed container, such as the original bottle or zip-close bag. Multiple vials can be emptied into a zip-close bag for disposal; vials should be disposed of in the regular trash at home. Personal information should be removed or marked out with a black permanent marker.

What **can** be taken back?

- ✓ Prescription and over-the-counter medications (solid pill, capsule or patch forms)

What **cannot** be taken back?

- ✗ Lotions or liquids
- ✗ Intravenous solutions
- ✗ Injectables, syringes and needles (i.e., *EpiPens)
- ✗ Iodine-containing medications
- ✗ Hydrogen peroxide
- ✗ Compressed cylinders or aerosols (e.g., asthma inhalers)
- ✗ Thermometers
- ✗ Alcohol and illicit drugs (i.e., marijuana, heroin, LSD, etc.)

*These need to be taken to a healthcare professional's office or to a hospital for disposal.

Spring Into

Learn the signs of stroke

Spring is in full bloom. Why not celebrate life by honoring National Stroke Awareness Month this May?

Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death in the United States, with one stroke-related death occurring about every four minutes. Stroke is also a leading cause of severe disability. Thankfully, it is preventable and largely treatable. But treatment effectiveness often depends on how fast the stroke victim receives medical attention.

When an ischemic stroke — the most common type of stroke — occurs, blood clots may block arteries that supply blood to the brain. The gold standard for treating the clots is tissue plasminogen

ACTION

 <p>FACE Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?</p>	 <p>ARMS Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?</p>	 <p>SPEECH Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?</p>	 <p>TIME If you observe any of these signs, call 911 immediately.</p>
--	---	--	---

activator, also known as tPA, which dissolves the blockage and improves blood flow to the brain. If administered within a three-hour window, the stroke

victim's chances for recovery increase. In other cases, the procedure of choice is a mechanical thrombectomy, which involves endovascular removal of the blockage.

While everyone experiences a stroke differently, there are common and easily recognizable symptoms. The Act FAST acronym (see above) is a simple way to remember them.

LIFESAVING CARE

Learn more about stroke and treatments at inova.org/stroke.

Reduce Your Risk

You have the power to decrease your risk of stroke. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urges everyone to begin by making healthy lifestyle choices. This means staying physically active; eating more fruits, vegetables and foods low in sodium and salt; maintaining a healthy weight; and avoiding cigarettes. Properly managing certain medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes, can also help lower stroke risks.

TOP Spot

Inova Fair Oaks Hospital receives highest ranking from federal agency

Three Inova hospitals received five out of five stars — a perfect score — in an annual hospital quality ranking by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Inova Fair Oaks Hospital (IFOH), Inova Fairfax Medical Campus and Inova Mount Vernon Hospital are the first and only hospitals in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area to ever receive the highest ratings from CMS.

CMS evaluates hospitals on up to 57 quality measures. The seven key measures are:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1. Outcomes -
Mortality | 3. Outcomes -
Safety of care | 5. Efficiency -
Medical imaging | 7. Process -
Effectiveness of care |
| 2. Outcomes -
Readmission | 4. Patient Experience | 6. Process -
Timeliness of care | |

Among the more than 4,500 U.S. hospitals evaluated, only 337, or 7 percent, received five-star ratings.

"I am so proud of our staff here at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital," comments IFOH CEO John Fitzgerald. "We know ourselves that we perform great work each and every day, and now the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is recognizing that as well."

THE BIG PICTURE

See how Inova hospitals compare at medicare.gov/hospitalcompare.

EXCELLENCE NEXT DOOR

Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Cancer Program gives patients specialized care close to home



Lemuel and Cynthia Dowdy are pleased with the treatment Lemuel received for his pancreatic cancer.

Since his bout with prostate cancer several years ago, Lemuel Dowdy has been vigilant about reporting any abnormal symptoms to his physician. So at his annual physical last year, 72-year-old Lemuel didn't hesitate to mention he was having some discomfort in his groin area. Suspecting a hernia, his physician sent him in for a CT scan. While the scan confirmed a hernia diagnosis, it also revealed something far worse — a mass on Lemuel's pancreas, which turned out to be cancerous.

Knowing that surgery was the next step after chemotherapy, Lemuel considered both Johns Hopkins and the hepatobiliary team of Virginia Surgery Associates (VSA) at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital (IFOH) for the procedure. The decision was clear after meeting VSA pancreas surgeon George Younan, MD, and the hospital's nursing staff. IFOH's innovative program, which focuses on conditions such as pancreatic cancer, allowed Lemuel to stay close to home for the procedure. After completing pre-operative chemotherapy,

Lemuel underwent a complex pancreatic surgery, called a Whipple procedure, with a complex resection and reconstruction of the portal vein.

IFOH created a Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Cancer Program in August of 2016. "With this program, we offer state-of-the-art treatment that patients can have locally, rather than going to a distant medical center or flying out of state," says Dr. Younan. "Being able to have that so close to home provides at least similar, if not better, outcomes for patients, and improves how they respond to treatment."

After doing a hepatobiliary fellowship at the Medical College of Wisconsin, Dr. Younan returned home to Northern Virginia and recognized a shortage of surgeons trained in the specialty.

Dr. Younan helped establish the program in collaboration with Timothy Shaver, MD. More than 250 of these highly specialized surgeries have been performed at IFOH since the program's inception. "This program is a testament to teamwork," says Dr. Shaver. "Inova Fair Oaks Hospital has allowed us to assemble a stable, well-trained team to care for these patients. That is why our results have been outstanding."

For patients like Lemuel, having that expertise close to his home in Reston was a major part of Inova's appeal. Lemuel has also been impressed with the level of care

and support he's received from diagnosis through recovery. After a successful surgery and chemotherapy, Lemuel currently shows no signs of pancreatic cancer.

"We feel very fortunate," says his wife, Cynthia. "The entire experience has been phenomenal. We believe Inova Fair Oaks Hospital's Pancreatic Cancer Program is at the leading edge for these services in the nation, and that makes a huge difference for patients."

Hepatobiliary Conditions

The hepatobiliary system encompasses the liver, pancreas, bile ducts and gallbladder. Common disorders affecting this system include:

- Pancreatic tumors
- Pancreatic benign and malignant tumors
- Liver benign and malignant tumors
- Gall bladder tumors and difficult gallbladders
- Diseases of the biliary tract
- Surgery for pancreatitis
- Complex abdominal surgeries

PERSONAL BEST

Unparalleled spine care keeps talented athlete on the move

Last year, Leigh Neary achieved an impressive feat: She finished her division's 2017 International Distance Lake Anna Triathlon. Her joy and pride — as well as the applause she received — were especially powerful considering a trauma she experienced just six months prior.

Back then, this 50-year-old Fairfax resident took a fall after tripping over an extension cord and then tumbling down three wooden steps on her back deck. She was left paralyzed on the ground for approximately 10 minutes. "It felt more like three years," Leigh recalls. "I couldn't feel or move my legs and arms. I was terrified."

FAST ACTION

Within minutes Leigh was headed to the Inova Fair Oaks

Hospital (IFOH) Emergency Department (ED) via ambulance. En route, paramedics performed stabilizing procedures including putting her in a collar to stop any motion that might cause additional or permanent injury.

Leigh received an immediate MRI scan of her neck that confirmed a bruised spinal cord. At that point she was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit for further observation, pain management and consultations.

"Leigh still had pain and weakness when she was discharged three days later. It wouldn't have been safe to put the spinal cord at risk with an immediate surgery, so everyone agreed to wait," points out Donald Hope, MD, FACS, Neurosurgery Chief at IFOH. "After about a month, though, it became apparent



Completing a triathlon last year was a big deal for Leigh Neary, as she underwent spinal surgery just months before.

that surgery was the best solution for Leigh's specific case."

A STUNNING FINISH

Dr. Hope performed what's called an anterior cervical discectomy infusion, which involves surgically removing bone spurs in order to decompress the spinal cord. The surgeon describes Leigh's

recovery as "remarkable," giving ample credit to his patient and his team. "Leigh is a talented athlete which greatly contributed to her success," he says. "As for our spine team, we did what we do best. We brought our talents and experience together so Leigh had the best possible chance for a full recovery."

Considering her triathlon accomplishment, it's fair to say that Leigh is exceedingly pleased with her recovery. "The only thing I gave up is high heels," she says.

Unsurpassed Expertise

The Inova Fair Oaks Hospital (IFOH) Spine Program, an integral part of the Inova Neuroscience and Spine Institute, brings patients world-class care and treatment for back pain, neck injury, spinal cord trauma and more. One of the Spine Program's many benefits is the driving team concept, says Donald Hope, MD, Neurosurgery Chief at IFOH. "Our physicians, surgeons, nurses and technicians are trained within Inova Spine Institute to work through a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach." In this way, the surgeon adds, Inova's spine experts are able to share a wide range of back and neck pain treatment options and focus on the specific needs of each patient.

SPINE SAFETY

Learn more about spine conditions and Inova's treatments at inovaspine.org.



FAMILY

MMA

Genetic testing and counseling help guide decisions for **breast cancer treatment**

When Nicole Sharabi, 42, tested positive last year for stage 3, triple-negative breast cancer, she was ready to take action. But before beginning any medical treatment, Nicole underwent genetic testing. “I wanted as much information as I could get,” she recalls.

Ultimately, Nicole underwent six months of

chemotherapy to shrink the cancer and destroy breast cancer cells that escaped into her body; she then had a bilateral mastectomy. Because her post-surgery pathology report revealed that a small percentage of the cancer remained, Nicole ended her treatment with radiation therapy. She is now considering trials for treatment (see sidebar for more).

PUT TO THE TEST

It turned out that the genetic testing was a critical component of the treatment process. Nicole’s comprehensive multigene panel test and pre- and post-test counseling with Kimberly Matthijssen, MS, licensed and board-certified genetic counselor at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital (IFOH), brought to light some interesting information.

While Nicole tested negative for gene mutations commonly linked to breast cancer, including the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, the test did identify a BRIP1 gene mutation. This mutation increases the risk of ovarian cancer, although it remains unclear as to whether or not it affects breast cancer risk.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Why consider a genetic test after diagnosis? Kirsten Edmiston, MD, Inova Medical Group, Nicole’s breast cancer



Nicole Sharabi, with her husband, Maged, son, Noah, and daughter, Kyril, has been in control of her cancer journey, thanks to genetic information revealed to her after her diagnosis.

The Price Is Right

Not long ago, genetic tests were an expensive procedure. Recent improvements in genetic testing technology have streamlined the process, and today there are also more labs qualified to perform genetic tests. “From recent advancements, the cost for genetic testing has gone from around \$4,000 to as low as \$250,” says Kimberly Matthijssen, MS, licensed and certified genetic counselor at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital. “This price drop is so important, especially when we feel a patient is a candidate for genetic testing, but doesn’t meet their insurance criteria and may be responsible for out-of-pocket cost.”

Now, Matthijssen stresses, patients concerned about their risk of cancer, perhaps because of family history, can take steps to alleviate anxieties. “We have affordable options — so if a test is warranted, we don’t have to turn away patients,” she says.

Exploring the Possibilities

Because cancer was still present in Nicole Sharabi after treatment, she will be working with the Inova Molecular Tumor Board to find solutions to eradicate it. The Tumor Board matches patients dealing with rare or recurring

advanced cancers with personalized treatments for their specific cancers. Due to Nicole’s cancer type, the lingering cancer puts her at risk of recurrence. She could be eligible for a clinical trial involving immunotherapy or one evaluating

a new vaccine that would specifically attack her breast cancer.

Nicole has met personally with the team of physicians, geneticists and other clinicians that make up the board and is considering several clinical

trials. Patient participation in the treatment decision-making process is key to Inova Molecular Tumor Board’s goal of patient-focused care — and it’s a philosophy that sets Inova’s board apart from other tumor boards.

T T E R S

surgeon, provides an answer. “Genetic testing helps us think about a patient today and for the rest of their life — because a gene mutation not only shows a predisposition for developing cancer, but it also suggests the patient’s risk for subsequent cancers,” she explains. “For Nicole, there were no genetic clues as to what caused her cancer, but the overall results helped us see a reduced risk of the breast cancer returning. That information impacted surgical recommendations.”

Nicole’s oncologist, Kathleen K. Harnden, MD, Inova Medical Group, focuses on systemic treatments — treatments taken by mouth or infusion — that can best achieve a cure.

“At the same time, I’m always focused on the patient’s future, which is where genetic testing comes in,” she says. “This is how we learn about risk factors.”

THE PATIENT’S VOICE

While genetic testing provides clues, Dr. Edmiston

is quick to add that no test offers definitive answers. Instead, genetic tests help point to various options. The testing adds an additional layer of understanding for patients who make their own medical decisions.

“When Kim and I studied my genetic test results, a double mastectomy was an option but not my only choice,” Nicole says. “I opted for a double mastectomy because it was the best decision for me. I didn’t want to worry about the breast cancer returning.”

As for the BRIP1 gene mutation that testing identified, Nicole plans to eventually remove her ovaries and reduce her risk for ovarian cancer.

“Nicole made the decision that felt best to her given what we learned,” Matthijssen says. “Our goal is to provide the most comprehensive genetic information possible and help patients understand their individual results. It’s then the patient’s role to use that information, along with their oncology team’s recommendations, and make choices that may help to reduce their cancer risks — as well as bring peace of mind.”

CANCER CARE

Learn more about Inova’s approach to breast cancer care at inova.org/breastcancer.

Inova is a not-for-profit healthcare system located in Northern Virginia in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, serving over 2 million people with over 1,700 licensed beds. It consists of five hospitals including the area's only Level 1 Trauma Center and Level 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Inova encompasses many health services including the internationally recognized Inova Heart and Vascular Institute (IHVI), Inova Translational Medicine Institute (ITMI), Inova Neuroscience Institute, Inova Schar Cancer Institute and Inova Children's Hospital. Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community it serves through excellence in patient care, education and research. More information about Inova is at inova.org.

If you do not wish to receive future mailings from Inova, please contact us at 703.972.2044 or inova.org/unsubscribe.



8110 Gatehouse Road
Falls Church, VA 22042

inova.org

IHS-076-1F0H

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
INOVA HEALTH
SYSTEM

Do quality ratings really matter?
They do when you are the patient.



Only Inova received the highest ratings for quality from CMS.

We're honored to be the first and only DC metro area hospitals awarded five out of five stars by CMS, an independent government agency. This recognition was earned through a rigorous analysis of 57 patient care standards that we exceed every day. It's Inova's ongoing commitment to personalized medicine that leads to better outcomes for our patients. To learn more, visit inova.org/fivestarthhealth.



Inova Fair Oaks Hospital • 3600 Joseph Siewick Drive, Fairfax, VA 22033 • 703.391.3600

Find a Physician



Looking for a doctor?
Visit inova.org/physicians
or call our 24/7, bilingual
physician-referral service at
1.855.My.Inova (1.855.694.6682)
to find one close to home or work.

Subscribe Now!



Sign up to
receive e-newsletters
about health topics
and programs at
inova.org/subscribe.

Ask the Expert



Find a FREE
Ask the Expert lecture
on a health topic that
interests you at inova.org/AskTheExpert.

Baby Time



Schedule a tour or
complete online
registration for your
OB admission at
inova.org/baby.