Inspiring News and Stories of

HOPE

Community Cancer Center

roseburgcancercare.com | Roseburg, Oregon | Spring 2024

SURVIVOR STORY | This Is What Hope Looks Like

'Life is Good Again'

A cancer diagnosis gave Dell Gray an even greater appreciation for the outstanding local medical community that he helped grow.

Dell Gray was no stranger to the Community Cancer Center.

In the years since 1995, when he relocated from Woodland, Calif., to create Roseburg's first multi-specialty medical clinic, Gray had been intimately involved in the local medical community, including the cancer center.

By the time he retired in 2012, Gray had not only helped found and overseen Roseburg Clinic's growth, he also had helped create and manage Oregon Surgery Center and worked with DCIPA (Douglas County Independent Practice Assoc.) and Umpqua Medical Group.

Along the way, he recruited some 80 new physicians to Douglas County and worked with Mel Cheney, the late former CEO of the Community Cancer Center, to bring to life its impressive facility on Stewart Parkway.

But it never occurred to Gray that he would ever be one of the patients benefiting from the state-of-the-art cancer care available locally and from a skilled care team that included Dr. Joshua Weese, one of the cancer specialists he recruited to town.

Then came June 2023 and an otherwise routine weekly luncheon meeting of the Rotary service club that has long been an important component of Gray's volunteer life.

"Sometime during that meeting, I just happened to put my hand on the side of my face and realized I had a lump under my ear," Gray recalls. "I'd never noticed it before and kind of panicked. I went to see my doctor and he suspected it was a blocked salivary gland that would resolve itself. But three weeks later, it hadn't gone away."

Gray's physician prescribed an X-ray and, after seeing the results, referred him to local ear, nose and throat specialist James Yun, M.D., who ordered a biopsy and CT scan. A few days later, Gray was enjoying one of the pastimes he enjoys most when he got the worst phone call of his life.

"I was up at Crater Lake with members of a visiting Rotary Club when Dr. Yun called and suggested I sit down," he says. "He told me it was cancer. It was a devastating thing to hear."

Gray was referred to Oregon Health & Science University, where a PET scan confirmed a diagnosis of HPV-derived squamous cell carcinoma. "It started in my tonsils and had metastasized through the lymph nodes down my neck and into my shoulder," Gray says. "The OHSU surgeon said he wanted to do surgery on my neck and throat ASAP."

The procedure was performed July 10, 2023, and three weeks later Gray started chemotherapy with Dr. Weess in addition to radiation therapy at Community Cancer Center.

"It was one of the most difficult periods of my life, but the compassion and professionalism of the cancer center staff carried me through," Gray says. "I am so grateful to everyone on that team, from the front reception to the back treatment room. We are so fortunate to have this cancer center in our community. It's comparable to what's available at the best cancer treatment centers in America."

Gray adds that, while the treatment regimen was difficult, the results made it all worthwhile. "At the start, I was told my cancer was 85 percent curable, and guess what? It is! Three weeks ago, I had a post-treatment PET scan and I am cancer free. My treatment was totally successful in every way."

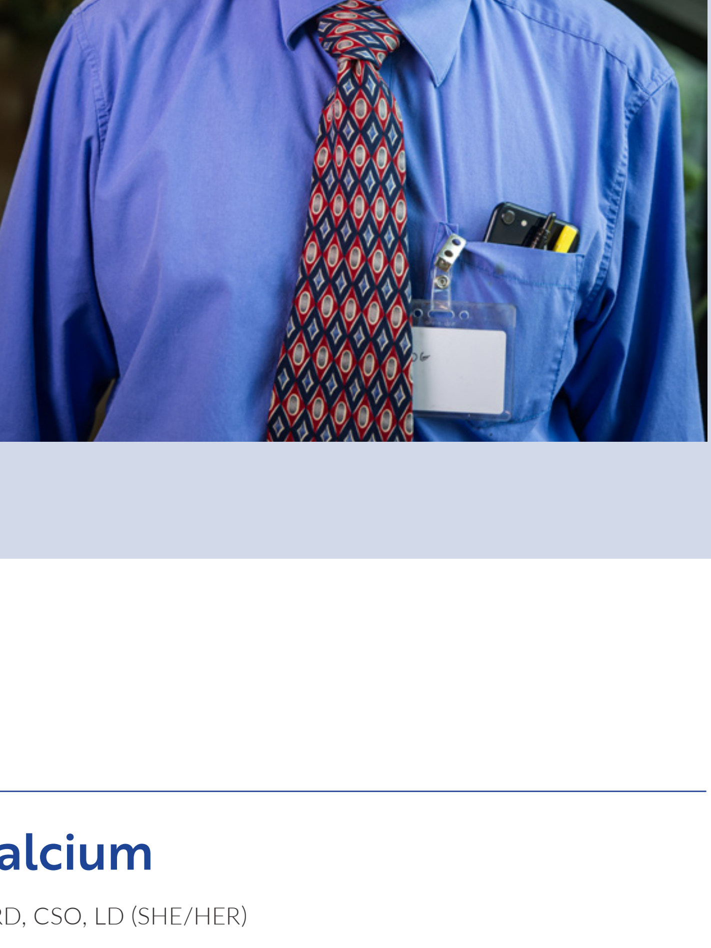
Gray's cancer diagnosis and treatment required him and Shell, now married 48 years, to set aside some plans and activities he loves for a year. But he says he's back at full speed now and truly appreciating life in ways he never imagined before.

"We deferred a whole lot of things because of the cancer. But I'm only 79 and have a lot of things I want to do. I've been visiting family in Florida. I'm going on a long-range tuna fishing trip and a river cruise on the Mississippi. A healthy lifestyle has always been important to Shell and me, so I work out three times a week and walk on days I'm not doing that. We have three great kids, two of whom live in town, and we have eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren to enjoy. Life is good again."

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Introducing:

Dr. David Gallardo, Radiation Oncologist



Like all medical students, when Dr. David Gallardo was at UCLA Medical School he was able to familiarize himself with several disciplines through a series of specialty rotations. In the end, one clearly stood out.

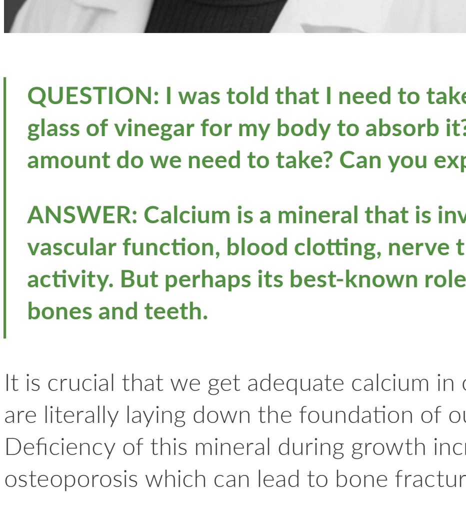
"Radiation oncology was the specialty that was most to my liking," says Dr. Gallardo, who joined the Community Cancer Center medical team in early 2024. "It's very patient oriented. And it's a specialty in which two strangers, the patient and physician, are helping each other out in a difficult time."

A native of San Luis Obispo, Calif., Dr. Gallardo attended the University of California at Santa Barbara before attending UCLA, here he earned his medical degree and served his radiation oncology residency.

Prior to relocating to Roseburg, he was practicing in Merced, Calif.

Though he'd never been to Roseburg, he says he was drawn to the community by the professional opportunity offered at the Community Cancer Center and the reputation of its medical director, Dr. Michael Marietta.

"Southern Oregon is very pretty, too," he adds.



ASK THE DIETIAN

All About Calcium

ALLY GOTTFRIED MFN, RD, CSO, LD (SHE/HER)
REGISTERED DIETITIAN
CERTIFIED SPECIALIST IN ONCOLOGY NUTRITION
COMMUNITY CANCER CENTER

This article is reprinted from the News Review – Ask the Dietitian July 2016

QUESTION: I was told that I need to take calcium pills with a glass of vinegar for my body to absorb it? Is this true and what amount do we need to take? Can you explain calcium?

ANSWER: Calcium is a mineral that is involved with muscle and vascular function, blood clotting, nerve transmission and cellular activity. But perhaps its best-known role is to promote strong bones and teeth.

It is crucial that we get adequate calcium in our growing years as we are literally laying down the foundation of our adult bone health. Deficiency of this mineral during growth increases the risk for osteoporosis which can lead to bone fracture in later years.

Calcium absorption requires vitamin D, and in its absence is not well absorbed. Vitamin D is manufactured by the body using sunlight and is also found in fortified foods. Natural food sources are limited but include egg yolks and oily fish (go Umpqua salmon!)

Rickets is a condition found in children who lack calcium or more commonly vitamin D from diet or sun exposure. Of note, this disease is on the rise in Europe in children who have moved from sunny countries to "non-sunny countries," cover their skin and are not traditional dairy consumers.

The amount of calcium you require is based on your age. Teenagers need around 1,300mg/day, 19-50 year olds 1,000mg/day, men 50-70 years 1,000mg/day and women 50-70 years 1,200mg and for people over 70 years 1,200mg/day. Pregnant and breast feeding women 1,300mg/day. If you have a medical condition these numbers might change.

Get your nutrients from whole foods when possible. The richest natural sources of calcium in the diet are milk, yogurt and fish with bones that are small enough to eat. Additional sources are fortified foods that have added calcium (and vitamin D) in a product where it's not found naturally. Calcium is also added to processed foods, so check ingredient labels.

We typically absorb about 30 percent of calcium from our food. Although vegetables and beans contain a respectable amount, absorption is compromised due to components that bind with calcium. It is fairly well absorbed in the form found in fortified foods like calcium-enriched orange juice.

If taking a supplement, ideally take an amount to make up a shortfall in your dietary intake. For example, if you eat a daily yogurt, a cup of milk (or other fortified beverage) you might only need to take 500mg in pill form.

The two major forms of supplement are calcium carbonate and calcium citrate. Calcium carbonate (Tums, Rolaids, Caltrate, Viactive chews) is best taken with food when we produce more stomach acid. This acidity helps your body dissolve and absorb the calcium.

Calcium Citrate (Citracal) does not require an acidic environment for absorption. It also does not have the constipating effect of the carbonate products. Acid blockers for indigestion will reduce the acidity of your stomach, negatively affecting calcium carbonate absorption. So calcium citrate would be a better choice if taking antacids.

So rather than having to drink a glass of vinegar with your pills, just choose a Citrate supplement!

To determine how your calcium supplement breaks down, put a pill in a glass of vinegar. If it dissolves in 30 minutes it should do the same in your stomach. Typically, products that carry the USP symbol have gone through that test and dissolve efficiently.

Calcium supplements are best absorbed in small amounts (500mg or less) so don't take your whole 1,200mg in one shot! space if out over the course of the day, this also helps reduce constipation issues!

Factors that negatively affect calcium absorption include excessive caffeine intake, excessive salt intake, taking iron and calcium pills together, long-term use of magnesium containing laxative agents and other medications that might interact. Check with your pharmacist regarding your medications for possible interaction with calcium pills.

Bottom line: Get your minerals from whole foods when possible. If necessary, take Calcium Citrate for best absorption, especially if using antacids, and be aware of nutrient/drug interactions.

Vinegar? I would find a nice balsamic product, mix it with olive oil and put it on my salad!

CANCER EDUCATION

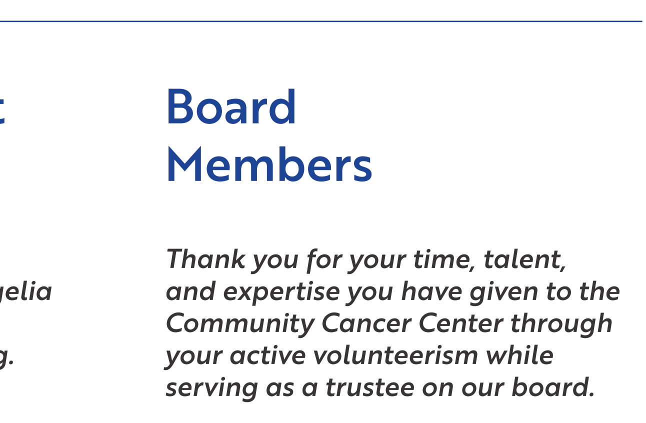
Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

We are thrilled to present an innovative and comprehensive health and wellness initiative designed by the Community Cancer Center in collaboration with the YMCA of Douglas County. The program, Prevent T2, is intended to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to understand, manage and reduce health risks, with a special focus on the correlation between diabetes prevention and lowering cancer risks.

This initiative not only addresses diabetes prevention but also recognizes the connection between lifestyle changes and cancer risk reduction, offering valuable support and resources for the community. Each session is facilitated by a CDC-trained Lifestyle Coach which will add significant value to the participants' experience. They will be introduced to skill development, goal setting, motivation and in-depth group discussions surrounding nutrition and movement.

Feel free to reach out to our Outreach team to learn more about the program guidelines, session details and how to commit to this valuable opportunity for positive lifestyle changes. Taking steps toward a healthier lifestyle can contribute significantly to managing cancer risks and overall well-being.

For those interested in participating in the upcoming Prevent T2 Diabetes Prevention Program, get more information and register by contacting the Community Cancer Center by calling 541-672-0072, emailing AFreeman@CCCRoseburg.org or visiting RoseburgCancerCare.org



Thank You Donors!

The Community Cancer Foundation wishes to express sincere appreciation to the many donors whose contributions have made the Community Cancer Center a success. Below is the list of donors for the months of January, February, and March 2024. These funds are utilized to assist patients with the cost of treatment, prescriptions, and other services.

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The Community Cancer Foundation would also like to extend a special 'Thank You' to the following organizations. Thank you for your support!

3 Sisters Acquisitions, LLC
Frontstream
Hanna Family Perpetual Foundation, Inc.
Kroger Fred Meyer

Roseburg Forest Products Employee Contributions

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans' Thrivent Choice (R) Program

Cancer Support Resources

For more information or appointments, contact Angelia Freeman, 541.672.0072 or afreeman@cccroseburg.org.

Cancer Support Group
Monthly meetings hosted by our Patient Mentors. This group is designed for anyone who has, or had, cancer and those who care for them.
Meets: Second Tuesday of each month, 1 – 2:30 pm

Tobacco Cessation Program
Weekly meetings or semi-annual classes designed with coaching and mentoring to aid the participant in quitting tobacco use for good.
Meets: Each Tuesday, 4 – 5 p.m.

Spiritual Care
Non-denominational spiritual care available for those in need.
Meets: By appointment only

OUTREACH, EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING
Services for Community
Cancer awareness programs, community outreach and conference facility reservation.

PATIENT RESOURCES AT OUR CAMPUS
Camp Millennium
A non-profit organization that hosts a week-long retreat for children dealing with cancer within their families.
Contact: campmoregon@gmail.com

Douglas County Cancer Services
Patient resource that helps patients in treatment with lodging, travel, wigs, turbans, prostheses and financial aid.
Contact: 541-440-9409

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Thank you for your time, talent, and expertise you have given to the Community Cancer Center through your active volunteerism while serving as a trustee on our board.

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Community Cancer Center
2880 N.W. Stewart Parkway
Roseburg, OR 97471
541.673.2267

roseburgcancercare.com

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Michael Marietta, M.D.
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