

The Story of Three Women

The Path to Cure Breast Cancer

Several years ago, our team at Pacific Shores Medical Group joined two clinical trials to determine whether the use of the medication Herceptin® in addition to chemotherapy could improve the cure rate of patients with early breast cancer. One trial was conducted by the Breast Cancer International Research Group, and is known as the BCIRG Protocol 006, and the other was undertaken by the National Surgical Breast and Bowel Project, and is known as NSABP Protocol B-31. Offering these clinical trial options to our patients has been a very important part of our mission, and well-informed patients have elected, in many instances, to pursue these options.

Recent analyses from these trials were presented at major research meetings, and additional presenta-

tions are expected. The preliminary results are strongly favorable and demonstrate marked reduction in the recurrence rate of HER-2 positive breast cancer patients treated with Herceptin®.

A complete analysis of all of the results of these trials, both in terms of the efficacy as well as the side effects, is underway, bearing in mind that cardiac toxicity can be seen with chemotherapy as well as with Herceptin®. The reduction of breast cancer recurrence in these patients is very striking and has generated great enthusiasm.

The patients featured in this article participated in these clinical trials. This experience shows that when patients and doctors collaborate through clinical trials, meaningful progress can be made to overcome cancer.

WHAT IS HERCEPTIN® AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Herceptin® is a humanized monoclonal antibody and is specifically designed to attack the human epidermal growth factor receptor-2 (HER-2) protein, which is present in large amounts in about 25% of breast cancer patients. The treatment is given

intravenously, usually once a week, and can be used alone or together with chemotherapy. Herceptin® is approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in patients who have advanced HER-2 positive breast cancer.

Joan and Ron Wheatly



Joan and daughter



Joan and friends

Lots of Life to Live

by Joan Wheatly

"Lots of life to live." I believed that in 2002 when I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and I still feel that way today.

The word "shocked" does not begin to describe my initial reaction to the diagnosis. But Dr. Tchekmedyan calmed my fears by answering every question I had. He explained I was HER-2 positive, which meant my tumor could potentially grow with unusual speed and was likely to reoccur.

But Dr. T is not one to present a problem without a solution. He told

me about a clinical trial that incorporated Herceptin® along with conventional therapy, and would, in theory, stop the HER-2 gene in its tracks.

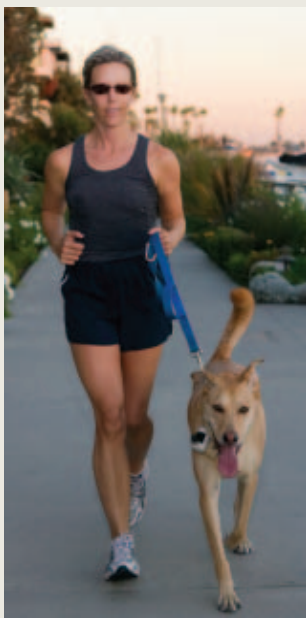
How lucky I felt not only to qualify for this trial, but also to have Dr. T and his able staff monitor the regime. I truly believe that the treatment saved my life.

Today I am cancer free, and I enjoy my family and friends. I am doing everything I did before cancer and with greater appreciation for life.

I still have "lots of life to live" thanks to Dr. Tchekmedyan and his dedicated staff.

and Clinical Trials

Caroline and Alex Lopez



A Glowing Future Ahead by Caroline Lopez

I never imagined I would be diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 36. But suddenly, I had to face my diagnosis and everything changed so quickly. In order to make informed decisions, I learned as much about my disease as I could; it was like learning a whole new language. But my knowledge helped me make informed decisions, which made me all the more grateful to be referred to Dr. Tchekmedyian. I gladly participated in a clinical trial testing the effectiveness of

Herceptin® in early stage breast cancer, knowing it would help others face this disease in the future.

While surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation were not easy, they were not as difficult as I envisioned. My main goal was to always keep a positive mental outlook and to remain healthy and fit. I relied on my family and friends to support and encourage me, especially my wonderful husband who has always been there for me.

Thanks to Dr. T and the staff at PSMG, I have a bright future ahead of me, again.

Jennifer Addington



Just Do It! by Jennifer Addington

I find it hard to relay words of wisdom for fear of sounding like some wanna-be self-help guru. That said, after being diagnosed with cancer at age 32, undergoing surgery, six months of chemotherapy, and seven weeks of radiation, the one thing I can say is, “attitude is everything.”

It sounds like a cliché, but Nike has a point with their “Just do it” motto. When I learned I had breast cancer, I was initially devastated. I cried,

called my mother, and we cried some more. Then I straightened up and said, “Okay. What do I do about it?” I decided to do everything I could to get informed, treated, and cured.

You must believe that you will succeed. Don’t just say it, “just do it.” Don’t wallow in self-pity, but accept it and take care of it. Having a great sense of humor, a positive attitude, and the support of friends and family can make dealing with breast cancer--although a complete pain in the rear--ultimately very “doable.”

A really good doctor helps too! Thank you Dr. T!