

Patients Benefit From Overlake's Relationship With Seattle Cancer Care Alliance

WORKING TOGETHER ENSURES THAT CANCER PATIENTS RECEIVE THE LATEST TREATMENTS

After two stem cell transplants at SCCA, Nicole Kelly's cancer is in total remission.



For over a year, Nicole Kelly, 38, thought a stubborn cold was to blame for her chronic congestion, coughing and runny nose. She went from doctor to doctor and was finally referred to Kathryn Crossland, MD, an oncologist at Overlake. On January 19, 2009—Nicole's birthday—she learned she had Stage III Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"I was in shock," remembers Nicole. "I'm still young; I live a healthy lifestyle and don't have a family history of cancer." With the support of her husband and three-and-a-half year old daughter, Nicole was determined to regain her health.

The cancer had spread to lymph nodes in her chest and neck. Dr. Crossland pursued an aggressive chemotherapy treatment, which successfully removed 90 percent of the cancer. Yet two months later, a scan revealed a mass was still present in Nicole's chest. It was time for a stem cell transplant.

Fortunately for Nicole, Overlake is part of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) Network. SCCA unites doctors and researchers from Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, UW Medicine and Seattle Children's to provide patients with the

very latest cancer treatments. Because SCCA performs hundreds of stem cell transplants each year, Dr. Crossland didn't hesitate to send Nicole there for her transplant.

Overlake's relationship with SCCA helps many patients, says Pam Rock, director of Overlake's Cancer Services. "It's the best of both worlds," explains Rock. "Our patients benefit from Overlake's highly personalized care, our cutting-edge technologies and the expertise of our oncology physicians. Our patients also have access to SCCA's clinical trials of promising new cancer-fighting drugs as well as SCCA's expertise in treatments we don't provide at Overlake."

Nicole ultimately had two stem cell transplants. The first used her own stem cells but didn't eliminate the cancer. A year later, she returned to SCCA for a different type of stem cell replacement. This time, she was implanted with stem cells from her brother's bone marrow—which closely matched with her own—and it worked. Eight months later, Nicole's cancer is in total remission.

"I'm very happy with this outcome," says Dr. Crossland. "We'll keep monitoring Nicole to make sure her brother's stem cells integrate properly with Nicole's system. But she should be on the road to a complete recovery."

For Nicole, getting her health back means spending more time with her family and at her job as a professor of astronomy. "I couldn't have asked for better treatment than I received from the staff at Overlake and SCCA," Nicole says. "Dr. Crossland in particular was wonderfully knowledgeable and caring. Every time I talked to her, I just knew I was going to be okay."

Visit www.overlakehospital.org/cancer for information on Overlake's cancer program.