



"I had already decided I would stay on my bike or show up at the gym as long as I could," said Jenifer Shapbell, after learning she had Stage III colorectal cancer. A cycling enthusiast and workout warrior, Jennifer, 52, maintained a commitment to physical activity throughout treatment. Her surgeon, Steven A. Fassler, MD, director, Colorectal Surgery at Abington Hospital – Jefferson Health, explained that fatigue is one of the most common side-effects of cancer and its treatment, and that exercise was one of the best ways to deal with it.

A diagnosis of Stage III colorectal cancer came as a surprise to the Warrington resident. Originally evaluated at another medical center, Jenifer sought out experts at Abington – Jefferson Health's Rosenfeld Cancer Center for a second opinion and relied on them to design and implement a customized treatment plan specifically for her.

KEEP ON EXERCISING!

Jenifer was excited to learn Dr. Fassler recommended regular exercise as part of her treatment plan. "I love working out," said Jenifer, asserting that doing so for as long as possible throughout treatment helped her to better cope with the other modalities, which included five weeks of radiation therapy, followed by minimally invasive surgery and recovery, then six months of chemotherapy.

Jenifer Shapbell

Dr. Fassler had earned Jenifer's trust during her first consultation with him. When Jenifer was first diagnosed at another medical center, she was discouraged by news the surgeon could only offer a traditional, open surgical procedure to remove a cancerous growth in her colon. "I had hoped to avoid a large incision, as well as the pain, scarring, and long recovery of open surgery, if at all possible," said Jenifer. As a licensed practical nurse, Jenifer was aware that less invasive procedures were available. She pursued a second opinion from Dr. Fassler to see whether or not she might be a candidate.

MINIMALLY INVASIVE TECHNIQUE

Easing Jenifer's distress, Dr. Fassler explained the minimally invasive technique he would perform to carry out the colectomy (removal of part of her colon) using specialized instruments to operate through several tiny incisions in the abdomen.



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"I needed answers, a thorough explanation of surgery and a treatment plan in order to feel comfortable moving ahead," said Jenifer. "Dr. Fassler provided that and so much more with reassurance and confidence."

During his comprehensive evaluation with Jenifer, Dr. Fassler learned she also had been experiencing symptoms from previously diagnosed uterine fibroids (noncancerous growths of the uterus). Therefore, Dr. Fassler consulted with Mark S. Shahin, MD, director, Hanjani Institute for Gynecologic Oncology and interim director, Rosenfeld Cancer Center, AH. Jenifer's case was also discussed by Abington's team of specialists from various disciplines who meet routinely to share expertise for each cancer patient in cancer evaluation conferences. Together, they review diagnostic studies and discuss treatment recommendations for patients as well as for community members seeking second opinions.

CLINICAL TRIALS AVAILABLE AT ABINGTON HOSPITAL

Additionally, patients like Jenifer also benefit from Abington Hospital's participation in the consortium for the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC)," said Dr. Fassler. This group is comprised of healthcare institutions that have come together with the purpose of improving the quality of rectal cancer care in the U.S. through advocacy, education and research.

"When considering Jenifer's case, our team was concerned about the risk of cancer potentially spreading to the uterus and ovaries," said Dr. Fassler. Because hysterectomy (surgical removal of the uterus) was a treatment option for Jenifer's symptomatic fibroids, the team recommended that hysterectomy, as well as the removal of the fallopian tubes and ovaries, be performed at the same time as the bowel surgery.

Jenifer was especially pleased to learn Drs. Fassler and Shahin would perform their respective procedures through the same small incisions. "They gave me a two-for-one deal," she joked.

A few weeks after surgery, Jenifer began her six-month chemotherapy regimen. Her prior work experience had prepared her well for this treatment, which would test her stamina. Before immigrating to the United States in 2006 to work as a certified nursing assistant, Jenifer had served for nearly a decade as a firefighter in Trinidad. She was no stranger to endurance or perseverance.

For several months during chemo treatments, Jenifer was able to enjoy her favorite activities – gym classes, outdoor bike riding and hiking – at her own pace. Although cancer-related fatigue kept Jenifer from turning the pedals during her final weeks of treatment, her spirits remained high. Today, Jenifer is cancer free and flying once again, with a steady cadence and solid grip on life's sweet ride.

For more information about our surgeons, physicians and services, visit Jefferson.edu/AbingtonCancer or call the cancer helpline, 800-405-HELP.

**BICYCLING THROUGH COLORECTAL CANCER TREATMENT
WARRINGTON WOMAN PACES HERSELF THROUGHOUT TREATMENT FOR COLORECTAL CANCER**

Skin Cancer Screening – FREE

Skin cancer is one of the most common and curable types of cancer. Dermatologists will perform a screening for skin cancer, as well as lesions at risk of cancer. Skin cancer rates continue to increase and it is becoming more common among younger adults. **This program is provided for the uninsured or underinsured.** By appointment only.

date: Saturday, May 11

time: 9 to 11 AM

location: Abington Health Center – Blue Bell

OR

date: Tuesday, May 17

time: 5:30 to 7:30 PM

location: Abington Hospital, Ambulatory Services Unit, Widener Building

OR

date: Saturday, May 21

time: 8:30 to 10:30 AM

location: Abington – Lansdale Hospital

to register: 215-361-6708



Prostate Cancer at Jefferson

The Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson has joined 14 other leading academic medical centers in the nation's premier prostate cancer clinical trials group – the Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium (PCCTC).

The membership not only gives Jefferson patients access to groundbreaking clinical trials from across the country, but brings Jefferson's research in prostate cancer to centers across the United States. This will help researchers to complete their studies faster, and bring much needed novel therapies to patients sooner.

For more information, visit Jefferson.edu/ClinicalTrials-cancer.

