

Healthy You

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 **Lehigh Valley
Health Network**

Solving a Mystery

Diagnostic tool helps Rosemarie Yanders get needed treatment

In fall of 2010, Rosemarie Yanders (below) began noticing something different about her appearance. “The color of my face wasn’t right,” says the 73-year-old Whitehall woman. Her skin looked yellow, a sign of jaundice.

Yanders had other symptoms, such as dark urine, so she visited her primary care doctor. He ordered imaging studies that confirmed Yanders had an enlarged bile duct inside her pancreas (the large gland that lies in the abdomen behind the stomach). The enlargement was caused by some sort of blockage. The mystery: how to identify that blockage.

Gathering clues

To help solve the mystery, gastroenterologist Shashin Shah, MD, with Lehigh Valley Health Network, began gathering clues. He first inserted a stent into the bile duct to alleviate her jaundice. “But I still needed to learn what type of mass was in her pancreas,” Shah says. To view that blockage, Shah used a tool called endoscopic ultrasound (EUS).

EUS uses ultrasound waves and an endoscope—a small, lighted flexible tube with a camera attached—to obtain high-quality images and information about the digestive tract. “It can identify problems and evaluate abnormalities, cysts or tumors in the esophagus, stomach, pancreas, small intestine, colon or rectum,” Shah says. “EUS also allows doctors to obtain tissue for biopsy and can be used to biopsy lymph nodes in the chest or abdomen.”

For Yanders and all people who undergo EUS, the procedure is performed under sedation, and you go home afterward. “I was asleep the whole time, and I had no pain when it was over,” Yanders says.

Finding the answer

Using EUS, Shah found the mass inside Yanders’ pancreas and took a sample of tissue for biopsy. Yanders received chemotherapy for what was eventually diagnosed as stage 4 pancreatic cancer. “My doctors are so responsive, and 13 months later, I’ve had no adverse effects from the treatment,” says Yanders, who also takes medication to help her body absorb nutrients from food. “I recently returned from Disney World, and I feel good.”

Next Step: *Lehigh Valley Hospital ranks among America’s Best for digestive disorders by U.S. News & World Report. Learn more about this care at lvhn.org/healthyyou or call 610-402-CARE.*

