

Strength from Within

Jersey Shore University Medical Center Immunotherapy gives Jackson woman a healthy, active outlook with less time in the hospital.

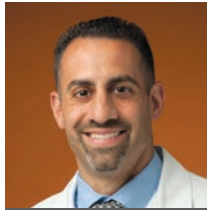
Jackson resident Donna Wardell, 55, has always had a lot on her plate, including working in human resources at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, participating in activities at her daughter's school, taking kickboxing classes and doing gardening. In 2013, when she experienced a recurring cough that slowed her down, she scheduled an exam with her primary physician.

A chest X-ray revealed a shadowlike image on her left lung, and subsequent tests revealed enlarged lymph glands in her sternum. Donna was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer.

Series of Treatments

Donna underwent chemotherapy and was awaiting clearance to return to work when her condition took an unexpected turn: She had a seizure while driving, leading to a major car accident. Donna learned that the seizure had occurred because cancer had spread to her brain. She was admitted to Jersey Shore University Medical Center, where neurosurgeon **Simon Salerno, M.D.**, successfully performed brain surgery to remove the cancerous mass.

Since her surgery, Donna has been receiving treatment from **David Greenberg, M.D., FACP**, a hematologist/oncologist at Jersey Shore. Instead of



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additional chemotherapy, Dr. Greenberg recommended a different approach — immunotherapy.

Boost of Immunity

Donna receives an infusion of the drug Opdivo® every two weeks. The drug helps make cancer cells recognizable to the immune system so that it can work to combat them. “Immunotherapy is a way of uncloaking cancer to our immune systems,” says Dr. Greenberg. “This treatment trains the immune system to treat cancer on its own, has a low risk of toxicity and is an advancement in care for patients who may not want to undergo additional rounds of chemotherapy.”

Now two years into treatment, Donna has not experienced any significant side effects. “Donna is doing great, and we could not have asked for better results,” says Dr. Greenberg. “While there is no cure for stage 4 lung cancer, these alternative drugs and therapies are changing lives. The natural history of this disease is changing before our eyes.”

Healthy Motivation

Today, Donna is doing well and continues to receive treatment every two weeks. Immunotherapy doesn't interfere with her busy life and even motivates her. “It actually gives me the desire to go on walks and eat high-protein meals,” says Donna. “I've made some amazing strides in physical activity outside but am cautious not to overdo it. I want to be healthy and enjoy things as much as possible.”

Donna credits the teams at Jersey Shore for their exceptional care, honest answers and the ability to provide regular, clear updates on her health. “The care this team expends on their patients is amazing,” says Donna. “They are very knowledgeable and work together to create an atmosphere of acceptance. I would not go anywhere else.” ■

By Adam Kertis

Donna Wardell, pictured at the Manasquan Reservoir, enjoys being outside.



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