

Breast Cancer Treatment Doesn't Have to be Scary



Cancer treatment is “less scary” than most patients thought it would be, according to a survey addressing radiation therapy fears.

Ninety percent of patients responding to a survey between 2012 and 2016 reported the actual experience of breast radiation therapy was less scary than anticipated. Nearly all of them said they initially were fearful of the treatment, mainly because they previously read or heard frightening stories about side effects.

Dr. Catherine Park, a radiation oncologist at Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital in Barrington, IL, says many patients come in with fears about radiation. “This may be due to the fear of the unknown but also can be related to hearing stories from patients who were treated with older techniques,” she says, adding that some patients remember their parents experiencing radiation burns after being treated with radiation therapy years ago.

Since then, radiation therapy has improved a lot. “We are treating more patients with shorter courses of radiation, which are just as effective at treating the tumor but have fewer side effects,” Dr. Park says.

It’s important to start treatment with a positive attitude. Fortunately, breast radiation is generally well tolerated, and most breast patients are able to continue working during their course of treatment.

Prayer: *God, give me courage to face the unknown with the confidence that you will be with me, whatever may come. Amen.*

Wishing you joy and good health,
Mary Bohlen RN
SJParishNurse@comcast.net