

Connie Fleagle

Finding a better case than Connie Fleagle's to serve as an example for being proactive about your health would be quite a challenge. Hearing her story provides a strong incentive for not putting off those yearly exams recommended by your doctor, even if no symptoms at all are apparent. Don't wait.

In spite of her busy schedule and on-going list of family commitments, Connie went to the Waynesboro Hospital for her yearly mammogram on December 21, 2018. She totally expected the super compression squeeze of her 2D and 3D imaging experience, but suspected nothing more. She felt fine. Everything felt fine. Then she got the call. A suspicious density in her left breast prompted the scheduling of a second set of images on December 26. "I knew it wasn't good when a second technician followed my original technician into the room after the procedure," Connie shared.

On January 8 Connie headed for the hospital yet again for a biopsy, concerned but still not anticipating any serious outcome. She was more focused on the up-coming trip to her daughter's home near Philadelphia. The procedure was relatively painless needing only local anesthetic. Two days later, January 10, the hospital called to say they had the results, but the usual protocol was to discuss them in person, not on the phone. Her husband Jim decided he might as well go along, just in case, but he was no more suspicious than Connie. They were both genuinely surprised to hear the diagnosis, ductal carcinoma in situ, "Whatever that means," Connie shared. But it was clear to both of them that her cancer was small and still confined to one duct – stage zero. "We'd never heard of stage zero," they both confessed, "but even that didn't sound good." Then it struck Connie – her mother had discovered a lump in her breast decades earlier at age 64 and undergone a mastectomy. Connie, too, was 64. "Crazy, huh? I'd never thought about it until all this," she said, although follow-up genetic blood tests revealed that Connie's breast cancer wasn't hereditary.

Things continued to progress quickly as Connie and Jim met with surgeon Lori Eakin at Breast Care Services WellSpan in Waynesboro on January 15. The recommended lumpectomy

revealed no cancer in any lymph nodes. It had been totally contained. “I was lucky,” Connie admitted.

Follow up treatment consisted of 20 days of targeted radiation at Chambersburg Radiation Oncology. Connie scheduled her sessions for 11:00 after which she and Jim went out to lunch sampling 18 different eateries in Chambersburg. “We went to The Copper Kettle twice,” she admitted. “They have a great crab wrap and turtle soup.”

On the not so pleasant side, local burning and irritation of her skin put a halt to Connie’s five times weekly aquacizes at the Waynesboro YMCA. She finally returned happily to the pool in June. Once healing was complete, almost no sign of her surgery or treatment remained. “We were lucky,” Connie and Jim agreed. “Dr. Eakin and everyone did a great job.” Connie is now back to her original routine of once-yearly mammograms. You can bet she’ll be there.

The Gala Cancer Auction Committee thanks Connie and Jim for sharing their inspirational story with us.

Cancer touches an enormous number of individuals. Research and support for its victims need to continue until a cure is finally found. The Waynesboro’s Annual Gala Cancer Auction has been highly successful in raising funds to sustain this cause for the past 40 years. This year’s auction has been scheduled for April 9 at Green Grove Gardens. Please visit the WAGCA website www.wagca.org for further details or to make a contribution to the cause.



Connie and Cooper

share the

smiles of a good prognosis.