

# Restore

Health and hope for patients and survivors WINTER 2010

## A Lasting Gift

Philip Bienvenu,  
City of Hope  
blood donor

Family members and friends can donate blood for a specific patient, but anyone who is eligible is welcome to donate at City of Hope.

Banking blood for a loved one fighting cancer is simple



**S**urgery, drugs, radiation and immune therapies are a big part of the regimen against cancer and other serious diseases treated at City of Hope. But so is another component that gets less attention: blood.

Cancer and the treatments to fight it often wreak havoc with patients' blood-making ability. Chemotherapy and radiation can reduce the level of blood cells and platelets, small blood components essential to clotting. All of this puts patients at a greater risk for infection, as well as for anemia and the fatigue it brings. That's where blood transfusions come in.

### Relying on Friends and Family

Health professionals collect, analyze and process thousands of pints of donated blood at City of Hope's Michael Amini Transfusion Medicine Center. Each year, patients at City of Hope use about 37,000 units of blood and platelets.

"The more we push the envelope in the treatments we are able to offer, the more we rely on transfusion support," says Shirong (Sean) Wang, M.D., M.P.H., chief of transfusion medicine and director of the Amini Center.

Banking your own blood ahead of surgery or treatment is tough when you have cancer, since

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P. CUNNINGHAM

➔ **SAVE A LIFE! TO SET A TIME TO DONATE BLOOD** call **626-471-7171** or visit **cityofhope.org**.

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many patients don't produce enough red blood cells or platelets. Fortunately, City of Hope's directed donor program enables friends and family members to make a donation for a specific patient so it can be ready when a transfusion is needed.

If your blood type is compatible, you can give whole blood directly to your loved one. If you have a different blood type, you can donate platelets (they're not type-specific). Or you can donate whole blood or platelets to help other City of Hope patients, and your donation will replace blood your loved one uses.

### Survivors Giving Back

Cancer survivors can safely donate blood products at City of Hope — under certain circumstances. If the cancer was surgically removed or treated with localized radiation, you can donate after five years in remission. Survivors of basal and squamous cell skin cancers can give sooner if they've had no recurrence or metastasis. However, you are ineligible to donate if you've had chemotherapy or a blood-based, recurrent or metastatic cancer.

“There’s no substitute for blood. Each time you donate, you could be saving a life.”

Each donated unit undergoes a meticulous process to ensure safety. More than a dozen tests check for a variety of infectious diseases. Technicians in the blood bank then separate each donation into several components: red blood cells useful in treating anemia, plasma for blood clotting disorders, white blood cells for fighting infections, and platelets, which prevent or stop bleeding.

“There’s no substitute for blood,” notes Kasie Uyeno, directed donor coordinator at City of Hope. “Each time you donate, you could be saving a life.”

### Donating Blood

City of Hope screens all potential donors of blood products.

- Each donation begins with an interview and a mini-physical.
- To donate at City of Hope, you must be at least age 17 and weigh more than 110 pounds, or (with parental consent) be age 16 and weigh at least 120 pounds.
- You must be healthy on the day you give blood. Do not donate if you've had cold or flu symptoms three days prior or have taken antibiotics or blood thinners within 48 hours (the latter for platelets only).

- You may not donate if you are at risk for HIV exposure or have received a blood transfusion in the last year.

Other medical, lifestyle and travel restrictions also affect eligibility.

— Candace Pearson



**ONLINE VIDEO**  
 Watch “Donating Blood at City of Hope” at [youtube.com/user/cityofhopeonline](https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofhopeonline) to learn more about becoming a blood donor.



## Take Caution with Supplements

After diagnosis, your No. 1 goal is to beat cancer. Go ahead and start exercising and eating healthier, but think twice before taking supplements, advises Lily Lai, M.D., surgeon and clinical associate professor at City of Hope.

“During active cancer treatment, patients should not be taking *any* supplements,” emphasizes Lai.

Since supplements aren't regulated and manufacturers aren't required to list the ingredients on the labels, it's impossible to know if a supplement will affect cancer treatment or cause drug interactions.

Lai offers insights on a few supplements that must be avoided:

**ANTIOXIDANTS:** Chemo drugs and radiation kill cancer cells. Taking antioxidants such as high-dose vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin A and selenium could counteract these effects and might make it harder to kill cancer cells.

**GINGKO AND GINSENG:** These herbal supplements may be associated with bleeding. If a cancer patient needs surgery, taking ginkgo or ginseng could increase risk of bleeding during the operation.

**ST. JOHN'S WORT:** St. John's wort has been shown to increase activity in the liver enzymes that metabolize prescription drugs, including those used during cancer treatment. Taking the supplement could interfere with the body's ability to process the drugs and interfere with treatment. — Jodi Helmer

# Continuing Care

**Y**ou might think you'll never forget anything about your cancer treatment. Or you might never want to think about your cancer treatment after it ends. But your health depends on your dedication to continued care.

Increasing numbers of survivors are living many years after their initial diagnosis, so continued support, accurate information and accessible health care all are crucial for long-term survivors.

Partner with your health-care provider to develop your own personal survivorship care plan for life after cancer. Make sure to get these items from your treatment team:

- 1** A treatment summary that includes types and dates of treatments you received, including:
  - Date you were diagnosed
  - The type and stage of your cancer
  - Surgical procedures
  - Names and cumulative doses of chemotherapy drugs
  - Radiation doses and areas of body that received radiation
- 2** Photocopies of key medical records, such as your pathology reports and surgical procedures
- 3** A listing of side effects and complications experienced, transfusions received and any hospitalizations
- 4** Other treatments used such as physical therapy, acupuncture, herbal supplements, vitamins or complementary treatments

**You and your health professional can decide on a follow-up plan. STEPS TO TAKE INCLUDE:**

- Get a description of your state of health at the end of treatment.
- Discuss a future schedule of visits.
- Determine who will deliver follow-up care and where.
- Understand the future tests that will be done, who will do them and why they are needed (such as those watching for a recurrence).
- See if any of your regular habits could interfere with your recovery and determine the lifestyle steps you will take to protect your health.

**Symptoms may occur that need further attention, so ask about:**

- Possible long-term effects (swelling or numbness in the limbs, pain or depression), how to watch for them and how they will be treated
- Symptoms to watch for that might signal a return of your cancer
- Health-care contacts (names and phone numbers) to call if you become anxious or have questions — not only the doctor, but also an oncology nurse or social worker

***Maintain this record and present it to any new treating physicians.***



**Other IMPORTANT steps to think about:**

- Stay informed about new research and developments in the treatment or late effects of your type of cancer.
- Attend community cancer programs or participate in teleconferences and webcasts that provide credible and current information.
- Take advantage of cancer support services such as pain management clinics, psychological counseling and therapy.

# 12/10-2/11

All classes and support groups meet at the Sheri & Les Biller Patient and Family Resource Center, City of Hope, 1500 E. Duarte Road, Duarte, Calif. To sign up, call **626-256-4673, ext. 32273 (3CARE)** or visit [cityofhope.org](http://cityofhope.org). Class schedules are subject to change so please call to confirm.

## SPECIAL CLASSES

### Nutrition and You: Healthy Eating for Spanish-speaking Patients and Caregivers

A new monthly nutrition class beginning January 2011. Preregistration is required. Contact Lina Mayorga, M.P.H., C.H.E.S., program evaluator and health educator, Department of Supportive Care Medicine, at **626-256-4673, ext. 64053** or [lmayorga@coh.org](mailto:lmayorga@coh.org).

### Gentle Restorative Yoga

**Mondays: 3-4 p.m., Wednesdays: 3-4 p.m. and 5:30-6:30 p.m.**

Course includes various yoga postures, development of daily home practice and relaxation techniques.

### Hands-on-Harps Concert

**1st Tuesday of each month: 6:30-8 p.m.**  
Helford Hospital Lobby

### Look Good ... Feel Better

In partnership with the American Cancer Society. No class in December. Call the Positive Image Center at **626-301-8874** for 2011 dates.

### Music Therapy

**Thursday, Dec. 16: 2:30-4 p.m.**

Music therapy has been shown to relieve stress and increase positive thinking. Preregistration required.

### Patient & Family Orientation

**Daily: 11 a.m.-Noon and 1-2 p.m.**

How to navigate City of Hope and where to find practical resources to make life a little easier.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

### Breast Cancer Support Group

**2nd Tuesday of each month: 6-7:30 p.m.**

Preregistration is required.

### Leukemia, Lymphoma and Multiple Myeloma Support Group

**1st Thursday of each month: 6-7:30 p.m.**

Preregistration is required.

### Type 1 Diabetes Resource Group

**Last Wednesday of each month: 4-5 p.m.**

No meeting in December. Call for 2011 dates and time to be offered.

### CLIMB (Children's Lives Include Moments of Bravery)

Call for space availability.

**Thursday, Dec. 2, 6-7:30 p.m.**

This is a six-week education and support series for children and their parents who are experiencing a cancer diagnosis in their family. Group discussion, arts and crafts and activities will be used to help parents and children learn healthy ways to cope. Dinner will be served. Preregistration required. Contact Jo Ann Namm, child life manager, **626-256-4673, ext. 64513**.

## Advocating for Patients and Caregivers

The Patient and Family Advisory Council aims to make City of Hope a better place for patients and families — and the group is looking for new recruits.

Sponsored by the Sheri & Les Biller Patient and Family Resource Center, the Patient and Family Advisory Council has had a hand in guiding various programs and services that help create an exceptional care experience for patients and families at City of Hope.

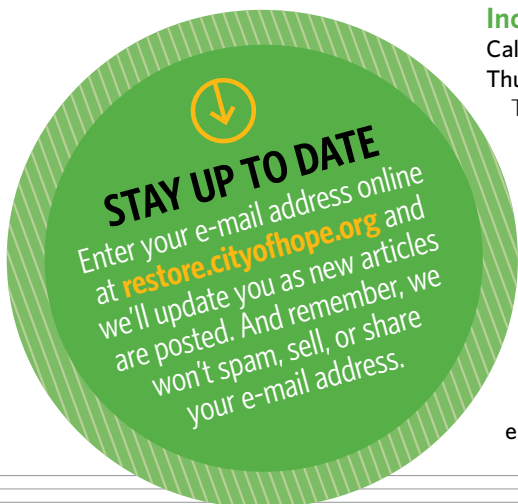
According to Annette Mercurio, M.P.H., C.H.E.S., director of programs for the Biller Patient and Family Resource Center, "Members most often say they feel good about giving back to other patients and families. It's about doing something to make the care experience outstanding for others."

- Members serve one-year terms and can renew their commitment for additional years.
- Current or former patients and their family members are eligible to join the council.
- Members would need to be able to spend two to three hours a month on council issues.
- Candidates should be passionate about partnering with the Biller Patient and Family Resource Center and City of Hope to create the best possible programs and services for patients and their families.

The Patient and Family Advisory Council meets the last Wednesday of the month from noon to 2 p.m. at City of Hope in Duarte. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Mercurio at [amercurio@coh.org](mailto:amercurio@coh.org) or **626-301-8926**. — Ryan Vincent

### ➔ SHARE YOUR STORY ONLINE

Did your family or friends do something special to support you during your cancer treatment? Share your story on [restore.cityofhope.org/community](http://restore.cityofhope.org/community) and read what others have said.



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