

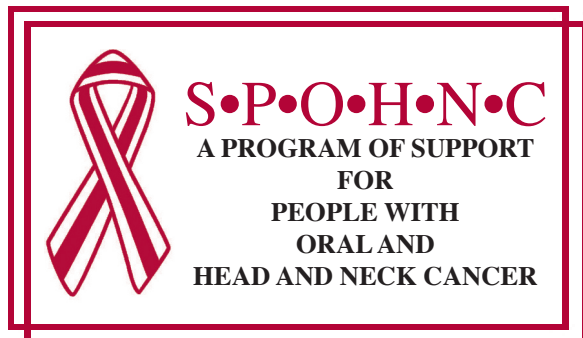
# NEWS FROM S·P·O·H·N·C



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SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH ORAL AND HEAD AND NECK CANCER, INC.

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## “Expert Nutritional Counseling for the Holidays and New Year”

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& Chelsey Wisotsky, MS, RD, CDN, CSO

Holiday time can be especially challenging for head and neck cancer patients. Holidays are often associated with eating plenty of rich indulgent dishes, celebrating with friends and family, and the stress of organizing, preparing and shopping for present exchanges and family gatherings. If you are not feeling yourself right now,



the upcoming holiday season may be daunting. In this article, you will find some helpful advice on how to make this season more enjoyable – by finding information on how to receive the right guidance, how to take advantage of nutritional counseling, and how to manage some bothersome symptoms and make the most of your nutrition.

### The Value of Receiving Nutritional Counseling During Treatment

We know that proper nutrition can help people optimize their life and manage many diseases. People turn to registered dietitians (RD/RDN) every day for support in weight loss, diabetes management, and to keep conditions like Crohn’s disease under control. What about head and neck cancer?

When people think of the link between head and neck cancer and nutrition, they may think of the side effects of head and neck cancer treatment: nausea, vomiting, fatigue, taste changes, and changes in appetite. As a result, many head and neck cancer patients experience problems eating their normal diet. An RD

can help you or your caregiver develop personalized suggestions to maximize your nutrition while managing side effects.

Nutrition needs change during the different phases of oral, head and neck cancer treatment. During the course of your treatment, you may experience physical changes from oral surgery, weight loss, or digestive difficulties. If you are on active treatment your body may require more calories (energy from food) and protein to support a higher metabolism and stress on the body. Protein allows the body to heal faster. Therefore, adequate dietary intake is essential. You may require more vitamins or minerals depending on the treatment you are receiving or if you are experiencing symptoms like dehydration. An RD can help to monitor your nutritional status at the different stages of head and neck cancer treatment and guide you towards the best dietary choices.

Meeting with a dietitian for an assessment can provide an opportunity to be given strategies to feel better emotionally and physically. Research shows that nutritional counseling may lessen the impact of treatment-related side effects, which results in an improved quality of life. Managing side effects medically and nutritionally will help you feel your strongest while maintaining your day to day activities and will give you the energy to spend holiday celebrations with friends and family. Nutrition counseling with an RD has been shown to help manage side effects even better than using nutritional supplements (nutrition shakes that have added calories, protein and vitamins/minerals).

### How to Select the Right Expert

The term “nutritionist” is not a regulated or licensed professional title. That’s right, anyone can call themselves a nutritionist! An RD has had specific training in food and nutrition and has passed a national exam. He or she is also trained to provide Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT), an evidenced-based nutritional treatment for your specific disease. It is important to seek nutrition advice and counseling from an RD. It’s also important to select an RD who specializes in oncology nutrition. You can look for the title “Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition” or “CSO” after his or her name. This signifies that the RD has had additional experience and training in oncology; a minimum of 2,000 hours is required in addition to passing a national exam with recertification every 5 years.

### What to Expect During a Nutrition Counseling Session

A nutrition consultation should involve several parts: First, the RD will review your medical records for pertinent nutrition-related issues. He or she will then interview you and ask you questions related to your diet history, medical history, medications, allergies, and nutrition-related symptoms. He or she will need to know your height, weight, and other factors that impact your ability to eat and absorb nutrients.

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After taking this information into account, the RD will design a plan specific to your individual nutrition needs. This may include a meal plan with details of what to eat or drink, or how many times to eat per day and nutrition strategies for side effect management. You may set short and long term goals and be asked to follow-up in a reasonable amount of time. You may be asked to keep a diary of your symptoms or of the foods that you eat in order to help the RD assess how you are meeting your goals and to make further recommendations.

**Key Points to Remember About Nutritional Counseling**

- Always seek information from a Registered Dietitian (RD), preferably one who specializes in oncology nutrition (CSO).
- Be sure to inform and coordinate with your medical team to implement the recommendations that your RD has provided to you.
- Follow-up with your RD in a timely fashion to ensure that you are able to meet your nutritional goals.
- Keep a food diary of your symptoms or the foods that you eat in a typical day; this will help your RD provide recommendations that are individualized to your nutritional needs.

**Nutritional Management**

**Specific to the Oral, Head and Neck Head Cancer Patient**

Chemotherapy and radiation therapy target any cells that turnover quickly in the body (this means cells that grow and divide rapidly). This targets both healthy and unhealthy cells. These cells are found in the lining of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, which consists of the mouth, throat, esophagus, stomach, intestines and rectum. As a result, oral, head and neck cancer treatments can cause a variety of side effects to these parts of the body such as sore mouth or throat, swallowing difficulty, taste changes, appetite loss, and nausea. These may affect your usual food and beverage intake.

You may have had to change your diet to a soft or liquid diet due to pain or trouble swallowing; and, you may be avoiding certain foods due to aversions or as suggestions made by a medical professional. These modifications may be even more overwhelming during the holiday season, as you have to adjust your traditions and celebrations to fit your needs this year. Many of the side effects oral, head and neck cancer patients experience can be managed with dietary changes, specific food selection, and preparation techniques. Below we have reviewed nutritional strategies for those experiencing nutrition-related symptoms and side effects during the holiday time.

**Mouth Sores** may occur in spite of the best oral hygiene. Proper oral hygiene may not necessarily prevent mouth sores, but can decrease severity and duration. Mouth sores can make it very difficult to eat and enjoy food.

**Nutrition Tips**

**For People Experiencing Mouth Sores/Dry Mouth**

- Avoid food and beverages that are salty, spicy, acidic, and rough or coarse in texture. Consume foods at room temperature instead of steaming hot foods
- Eggnog is a mild holiday drink you may enjoy

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NUTRITION continued from page 2

- Include sauces, liquid, broth, or gravy to moisten hard or crunchy food
- Consume soft foods such as soups, stews, casseroles, egg dishes, tender meats, and well-cooked vegetables or grains
- Adjust your holiday recipes to avoid harsh flavors like black pepper, chili flakes, vinegar, and lemon; serve these on the side for others to flavor if desired
- Drink fluids through a straw to divert away from painful areas
- Stay hydrated and drink plenty of fluids. Sip on fluids throughout the day
- Discuss with your medical team if and when drinking alcohol is safe

**Swallowing Difficulty** can be a result of sores or irritation in the throat or esophagus. It can be mild and require the consumption of softer foods or a modified consistency diet or alternate means of nutrition support to meet a patient's nutritional needs.

**Nutrition Tips  
for  
People Experiencing  
Difficulty Swallowing**

- Avoid foods that are spicy, acidic, and rough or coarse in texture
- Consume soft foods such as soups, stews, casseroles, egg dishes, tender meats, and well-cooked vegetables or grains
- Use sauces, liquid, or gravy to moisten and soak foods may make it easier to swallow
- You may consider preparing, or asking a friend/family member to prepare a soft cooked version of part of the meal for you. Food preparation techniques such as steaming and pureeing may adapt the meal to your requirements. Steaming vegetables until they are very soft allows for easy mashing, and cooking down protein foods in sauce or gravy, until they are fork tender, may make them easier to swallow
- Fill up on a liquid nutrition supplement or smoothie before leaving the house, in case soft and liquid options are limited at the holiday gathering
- Consume foods at room temperature

**Taste and Smell Alterations** occur as a result of oral, head and neck cancer treatment and can impact the sense of taste and smell. Certain foods and beverages may become unappealing, tasting bland, bitter, salty or metallic. Smells may be overwhelming and cause nausea and vomiting or poor appetite.



**Nutrition Tips for People  
Experiencing Taste Alterations**

- Rinse with a warm water/ baking soda solution to freshen palate before and after meals (recipe for baking soda rinse: 1 quart water, ¾ teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon baking soda). Do not swallow this mouth rinse
- Use a non-alcohol based mouthwash such as Biotene, as alcohol containing mouth wash can make the mouth dry
- If red meats taste strange, try substituting other proteins in your recipe, such as chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, or tofu. If you typically prepare a red meat based recipe for the holiday, you may prepare an easy baked fish recipe in addition
- Consider that your favorite holiday dish may have an altered taste
- Avoid favorite foods on the days around or the day of head and neck cancer treatment
- Prior to holiday meals, spend time with friends and family outside of the kitchen, either on an outdoor patio or separate room to avoid strong smells of food cooking
- Delegate someone to cook recipes that have strong smells

A simple acronym called “FASS,” standing for fat, acid, salt, and sweet, can be very helpful if you are experiencing taste alterations.

- Lack of taste, “cardboard” without mouth sores*
- Season foods with acidic flavors, such as lemon, citrus, vinegar, or pickled foods.

*Metallic taste*

- Add a fat source like extra virgin olive oil or sea salt
- Avoid metal utensils; use plastic utensils instead
- Add extra flavor to foods with spices such as onion, garlic, chili powder, basil, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup or mint
- Avoid hot foods to reduce strong odors, serve food at room temperature
- Use sugar-free lemon drops, gum or mints

*Salty, Bitter or Sour taste*

- Try adding sweetening agents such as sugar, maple syrup or honey to help enhance the taste

*Sweet taste*

- Add six drops of lemon or lime juice or vinegar until sweet taste is muted

**Appetite Loss** is a common side effect experienced by patients receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatment. Appetite loss can be caused by multiple factors, including nausea and vomiting, taste alterations, fatigue, pain, stress, and can be head and neck cancer-related itself. If your appetite has changed, it may be overwhelming when friends and family are pushing you to each indulgent, rich holiday foods. Well-meaning friends and family members may go out of their way to bring your favorite foods, and may be disappointed when you don't find them appetizing. You may suggest food items or recipes that sound appealing to you and are easy to tolerate.

**Nutrition Tips for People  
Experiencing Appetite Loss**

- Don't be afraid to delegate if you are hosting the party, suggest that friends and family take on other responsibilities that encourage them to help in ways, other than preparing your favorite holiday dish
- Eat small frequent meals (5-6 times a day) instead of 3 large meals. Aiming to eat at least every 2-3 hours
- Add extra calories by adding extra butter, oil, mayonnaise, sauces, dressing, gravy, honey, jam, cheese, and nut butters to meals

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NUTRITION continued from page 3

- Add extra protein by including poultry, meat, fish, eggs, yogurt, cheese, beans and nuts to meals and snacks. Dried milk powder mixed in gravies, soups, milk-based beverages and sauces can also add extra protein
- Drink high calorie liquids such as juice, milkshakes, eggnog and hot chocolate made with whole milk
- Drink fluids half an hour before or after meals as some people find consuming beverages with meals can make them feel fuller
- Be active. Exercise can help stimulate appetite. Enjoy a walk with a family member before meal time

**Nausea and Vomiting**

There are different causes for nausea and vomiting such as irritation of the GI tract, changes in the chemical receptors in the brain, and feelings of anxiety or nervousness related to treatment. Not all chemotherapies cause nausea and vomiting and many are well controlled due to prophylactic antiemetic treatment. Prevention and early management of nausea and vomiting are most effective. Heavy holiday foods can be overwhelming to a sensitive stomach. Be choosy of which holiday foods you are going to enjoy if you often experience uncontrolled nausea and vomiting.

**Nutrition Tips  
for People****Experiencing Nausea and Vomiting**

- Take antiemetics half an hour to an hour before holiday meals, as instructed by your medical team
- Having an empty stomach may make nausea and vomiting worse. Aim to eat regularly scheduled meals and snacks, even if it is just a few bites. Often, dry carbohydrates like toast, dry cereal or crackers are well tolerated
- Avoid any holiday dish in a sauce that is very creamy, heavy, or spicy
- Drink large amounts of fluids separate from meals and try to separate beverages and solid food by a half an hour as filling up on both may make nausea worse
- Bring ginger tea and ginger snap cookies to your holiday celebration. Ginger can help manage symptoms of nausea

**Food Safety**

Some chemotherapy regimens may cause low blood counts, which means lowered levels of certain types of blood cells in your body. When white blood cells are low it is called neutropenia. Since white blood cells fight infection, if they are low, you may be at a higher risk for becoming sick from food that has bacteria on it. At holiday time, there are some guidelines to follow to prevent this:

- Serve yourself first, before other hands/germs touch the dishes, food, and serving utensils
- If you have leftovers to enjoy: Wrap them well in airtight packaging or seal them in a stored container, store in the refrigerator for 3-4 days or frozen for 3-4 months. Adequately reheat leftover food by ensuring they reach 165°F or if reheating in the microwave, cover and rotate the food for even heating
- If you are at a work potluck, use a microwave safe plate to heat food until it is steaming to ensure it is thoroughly reheated

**In Conclusion**

When many things seem out of your control during a head and neck cancer diagnosis, nutrition is something that you can control. With some planning and adjustments, the holidays can be just as enjoyable as they typically are. Work with an oncology dietitian and your medical team to create a holiday nutrition plan to ensure you have the tools and ideas to enjoy the holidays. It's important to use all the knowledge you have in the battle against head and neck cancer. Don't overlook the power of the tools you have in front of you – what you eat. We wish you a wonderful Holiday Season and hope that you have been able to take away several suggestions to help you.

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*Editor Note: Jessica is a registered dietitian and certified specialist in oncology nutrition (CSO). She studied nutrition at Cornell University and completed her dietetic internship at New York Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center. She obtained her Master's degree through the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.*

*Jessica is in charge of all operations at Savor Health including clinical and culinary operations ranging from menu development to evidence-based website content, relationships with registered dietitians and social workers and developing processes and protocols for intake, management and outcomes analysis of patients.*

*Chelsey is a Registered Dietitian and Board Certified Specialist in Oncology nutrition (CSO). She completed her Dietetic Internship at Northwell Health, received her BS in Dietetics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her MS in Nutrition at Stony Brook University's School of Medicine. Chelsey works as an outpatient dietitian at Mount Sinai covering all of the downtown cancer services at Mount Sinai Beth Israel and Phillips Ambulatory Care Center. Chelsey also works with Savor Health as one of their expert oncology dietitians. In both roles, Chelsey works with patients and families before, during and after treatment to optimize their nutrition through dietary counseling and support.*



## Happy Holidays from Eat Well Stay Nourished A Recipe and Resource Guide For Coping With Eating Challenges

Complied and Edited by Nancy E. Leupold, Survivor, Founder & President Emeritus

### Winegrower's Duck

from *Eat Well Stay Nourished Volume 1*

6 duck drumsticks with thighs attached  
2 small onions, chopped  
1 pt. grape juice (or use red wine for a heavier, richer sauce)  
1 pt. water  
salt and pepper  
1 tsp. thyme  
1 bay leaf  
2 tsp parsley, minced  
1 small onion, studded with clove  
1 ½ c. seedless blue grapes



Prick the duck with a fork. Brown on both sides in large stew pot. Remove and set aside. Fry chopped onions til golden. Add duck pieces, grape juice (or wine), water, thyme, bay leaf, salt and pepper to pan. Bring to boil then simmer uncovered for 1 to 1.5 hours over low-medium heat til duck is tender but not falling off bone. Turn duck several times in juice while cooking. When duck is tender, remove carefully and reduce juice by boiling for 5 minutes. Thicken with a flour/water paste if desired. Add 1 ½ cups blue grapes to juice and cook for 3-4 minutes. Return duck to sauce and serve in deep serving dish.

~ Pat C., MN

*\*Adapt these to your needs by thickening gravies to moisten for easier swallowing.\**

### Baked Acorn Squash

from *Eat Well Stay Nourished Volume 1*

1 acorn squash  
4 Tbsp. unsalted butter  
1 Tbsp. dark brown sugar  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
pinch of ground cloves (optional)  
pinch of salt



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a baking sheet and baking dish. Halve squash lengthwise. Transfer cut side down, to baking sheet and bake until tender – about 45 minutes. Don't turn off oven. While squash cooks, melt butter and stir in remaining ingredients. Keep warm until needed. Arrange squash, cut side up, in baking dish. Spoon butter and seasonings equally over sections. Bake squash another 15 minutes until it's very soft. Serve hot.

~ Anna N., CA

*Eat Well  
Stay Nourished  
A Recipe and  
Resource Guide  
for Coping With  
Eating Challenges*  
compiled by  
Nancy E. Leupold, Survivor, Founder  
and President Emeritus



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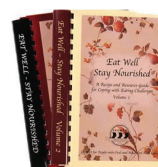
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## A Heartfelt Thank You To SPOHNC's Volunteers

*"One day an elephant saw a hummingbird lying on its back with its tiny feet up in the air. "What are you doing?" asked the elephant. The hummingbird replied, "I heard that the sky might fall today, and so I am ready to help hold it up, should it fall." The elephant laughed cruelly. "Do you really think," he said, "that those tiny feet could help hold up the sky?" The hummingbird kept his feet up in the air, intent on his purpose, as he replied, "Not alone. But each must do what he can. And this is what I can do." - Chinese Proverb*



Dear Friends,

The end of another year brings a time to reflect back on the past 12 months, celebrating survivorship and

sharing love and friendship with the people that bring us the most joy. This past year SPOHNC celebrated 25 years of supporting patients and their families. One woman's vision and dream became a patient's source for hope and strength. Our thanks to Nancy Leupold for giving patients, caregivers and their loved ones a place to inspire hope.

SPOHNC is indebted to our volunteers, who have shared this promise of inspiring hope, so that others may have the opportunity for a better life beyond cancer. It is our team of volunteers that have dedicated their lives to helping and caring for those who have

been diagnosed with oral, head and neck cancer. Without your compassion, love and desire to give of yourself, SPOHNC could not be where it is today...still continuing to give hope and strength.

Many of you are survivors who felt a calling to give back, and for this, we thank you. Some of you are healthcare professionals, who also understand the need to support one who is diagnosed with this disease. Offering to lend a listening ear and the compassion that a patient yearns for can mean so much.

The highest level of commitment of our volunteers is seen through SPOHNC's Chapter Facilitators and Co-Facilitators and our National Survivor Volunteer Network. Patients looking for comfort; caregivers asking for advice; healthcare professionals offering help; those who have walked the journey supporting others.

YOU care, YOU encourage, YOU are supportive, YOU are positive, YOU are kind, YOU listen, YOU make one smile!

It's the little things that make life so big and SPOHNC thanks each and every one of our volunteers. Thank you for sharing your talents, resources, friendship, love and for sacrificing your time. Thank you for making a difference. You are our heroes.

May this holiday season bring you joy, peace and the time to share yourself with those you hold dear. To each of you we wish you a very Happy & Healthy Holiday Season.

With all our hearts, we thank you for helping us to inspire and impact so many lives. We celebrate you!

With heartfelt gratitude,

Mary Ann Caputo, Executive Director and the SPOHNC Family

*"A good life is lived by CHOICE, not by CHANCE giving others the ability to go forward."*

### *This Holiday Season*



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*photo courtesy of PJ Jordan*

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## Football Pre-Season for SPOHNC and Jim Kelly



SPOHNC recently partnered with Football Hall of Famer Jim Kelly, Merck, the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance, and Savor Health to launch the *Your Cancer Game Plan* campaign. This program will provide people living with head and neck cancer and their caregivers with tools and resources designed to help each patient stay positive and hopeful.

*Your Cancer Game Plan* recently kicked off with Jim Kelly and SPOHNC's

Executive Director, Mary Ann Caputo, participating in a nationwide media tour. More than 20 TV and radio stations interviewed Jim and Mary Ann live from across the United States! During the media tour, they spoke about the importance of support, and reminded their audience about the FREE *Your Cancer Game Plan* webinar that was held on October 19th. It was a very exciting day for SPOHNC!

During the webinar, the partners in *Your Cancer Game Plan* talked about nutrition, emotion and communication when dealing with a cancer diagnosis. Webinar partners took questions from a live audience and lots of great information was shared, to help those who have been

affected by the diagnosis and treatment of oral, head and neck cancer.

The webinar is still available to view at [spohnc.org](http://spohnc.org). For new registrants, click on the "REGISTER NOW" button and fill in the registration information. Please select SPOHNC as the website that directed you to the page. Once you have completed and submitted your registration, you can view the webinar. If you have previously registered, click on REGISTER NOW,



enter your e-mail address and log in to view the webinar.

Football Fans Everywhere - **Look for additional information in the coming months.** We hope you gain valuable information from *Your Cancer Game Plan*. Let us know what you think!

### Falling Snow

See the pretty snowflakes  
Falling from the sky;  
On the wall and housetops  
Soft and thick they lie.  
On the window ledges,  
On the branches bare;  
Now how fast they gather,  
Filling all the air.  
Look into the garden,  
Where the grass was green;  
Covered by the snowflakes,  
Not a blade is seen.  
Now the bare black bushes  
All look soft and white,  
Every twig is laden,  
What a pretty sight!



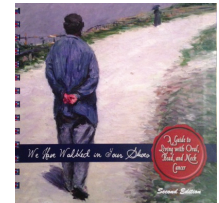
### SPOHNC is Seeking Survivors to Share Your Story



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### We Have Walked In Your Shoes: A Guide to Living With Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Second Edition



by Nancy E. Leupold  
& James J. Sciubba, DMD, PhD

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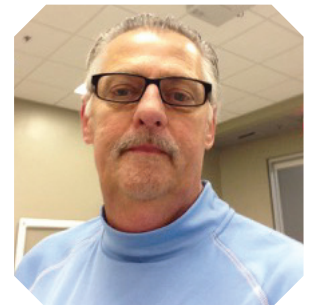
*Don L.*



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## A Tribute to Caregivers Everywhere

“You are Not Alone”

*Mona Newsome Wicks PhD, RN, FAAN*

You offer kind words. You lift and you tug. You bathe and you dress. You comfort and you hug. You drive and you shop. You cook, nurse and you clean. You often, defer your personal dreams. You are not alone.

You sometimes worry and you often pray. You work first at home, and then at your job all day. You sleep very little, but you sleep when you can. Sometimes you have more work, than you can possibly stand. Yet, you remain steadfast and hopeful. You are not alone.

We honor you, we acknowledge your care. We acknowledge the love, that you unselfishly share. Out of concern, we make these requests. We ask that, when you are tired that you please rest. We ask you to walk, we ask you to sleep. We ask that you healthily and regularly eat. We ask that you see your health care provider. That you share your concerns as it is much healthier, than isolation and proud silence. You are not alone.



We remind you to ask for help and to weep, for tears can offer a much-needed release. We pray for you, joy and a well-deserved peace. Caring for others, without caring for self, can undermine physical, spiritual, and emotional health. You are not alone.

Your efforts are an important and an unselfish contribution. This work greatly contributes to sustaining our nation. We salute you and thank you for all that you do. Most of all we wish happiness and good health to you. You are not alone.

## Our Thanks To You This Holiday Season

*“Happiness... consists in giving, and in serving others” ~ Henry Drummond*

Looking back on the past year, SPOHNC has been reflecting upon your generosity, and all that you have helped us to achieve. Thanks to your continuing support, SPOHNC has been able to:

- Welcome 7 new SPOHNC Chapters to our SPOHNC Family – including one for Military and Beneficiaries, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center – and an international Chapter – SPOHNC’s first - in Sweden coming in 2017!
- Provide information and support to our more than 130 existing Chapters.
- Provide hope to nearly 16,000 newly diagnosed patients, caregivers and family members through our resources and publications.
- Connect nearly 800 individuals on our closed Facebook group, and thousands on our page.
- Publish 8 issues original issues of “News from SPOHNC.”
- Offer help to more than 100 new SPOHNC

members through our brand new Product Directory.

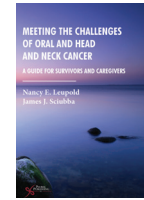
- Help more than 1,500 caregivers, newly diagnosed patients and survivors to find financial resources, SPOHNC Chapters and additional community resources.
- Match more than 350 newly diagnosed patients and caregivers through our National Survivor Volunteer Network match program.



During the holidays, please consider a gift to SPOHNC, so that we may continue to help inspire hope and healing for those who need it most. It is because of YOU, that we are able to accomplish so much. Thank you... and Happy Holidays.

### *Meeting the Challenges of Oral and Head and Neck Cancer A Guide for Survivors and Caregivers - Second Edition*

*by Nancy E. Leupold &  
James J. Sciubba, DMD, PhD*



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*“Thank You SPOHNC for all you do throughout the year!!! You are a wonderful source of information for all our head & neck patients! Enjoy the holiday!”*

*~ Betty C.*

**Connect with SPOHNC’s “group” on Facebook**

## Head and Neck Cancer News

### *Postop Radiotherapy May Help in Oral and Oropharyngeal Cancer*

November 17, 2016—Adjuvant postoperative radiotherapy (PORT) boosts survival particularly in younger patients with T2N1 oral cavity (OC) and oropharyngeal (OP) squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), new research shows.

“The results of this study suggest that postoperative radiation therapy should be strongly considered in T2N1 patients even in patients without adverse features,” Dr. Vasu Divi told Reuters Health by email.

As reported November 10 online in JAMA Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Dr. Divi of Stanford University Medical Center in Palo Alto, California and colleagues reviewed information from the National SCC Database for 2004 to 2013.

Among the exclusion criteria were receipt of neoadjuvant radiotherapy, any chemotherapy, or any treatment with palliative intent.

PORT was employed in 740 of 1467 patients with OC SCC (50.4%) and 449 of 790 with OP SCC (56.8%).

After controlling for factors including pathologic characteristics, in patients with

pN1 disease without adverse features, PORT was associated with improved overall survival in both OC patients (hazard ratio, 0.76) and OP patients (OR, 0.62)

This association persisted in patients younger than 70 years, for both OC (HR, 0.77) and OP (0.48). Corresponding values for those with pT2 disease were 0.64 and 0.56.

This was not the case for patients 70 years or older (HR, 0.78) or those with pT1 disease (HR, 0.80). And, say the investigators, “Limited data are available on the tolerance and benefit of PORT in elderly patients.”

The researchers point out that for patients with OC SCC, National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines recommend consideration of PORT. For patients with OP SCC, PORT is no longer recommended.

The current findings, they add, “suggest that we should continue to study the effect of this change in the NCCN guidelines.”

And, added Dr. Divi, “When updating the guidelines, clinicians should differentiate

between T1N1 and T2N1 disease.”

Commenting by email, Dr. Frank Worden told Reuters Health that while retrospective data must be interpreted cautiously, “they did evaluate a fair number of patients. I think what is most telling is the possible support for radiation therapy in OC and OP patients with small primary tumors and one lymph node.”

Dr. Worden, of the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center in Ann Arbor, added, “Typically, in such patients, we may consider close observation in lieu of no adverse features, so improvements in survival may alter our thinking especially in younger patients.”

He concluded, “It is important to note that the benefits of chemo RT in patients greater than 65 is also limited, so the fact that they looked at this population and found similar findings suggest support for not administering adjuvant therapy in this patient population.”

###

## Chapter Facilitator News

### *30 Years of Wedded Bliss!*



A little birdie told SPOHNC some important news recently, so we thought we'd do something special for a very deserving couple.

### **Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary to Bill and Linda Clyne – SPOHNC Greenville, SC Chapter Facilitators!!**

A few years ago, NSVN volunteers Bill and Linda shared the exciting news with SPOHNC. They were heading east from their home in California and would now live in Greenville, South Carolina. Little did anyone expect that they would soon be

heading up the Greenville, South Carolina Chapter of SPOHNC.

The Greenville Chapter is blessed to have the special brand of support and caring that survivor, Bill, and his lovely wife and caregiver, Linda, continue to provide for so many on their cancer journey.

The Clyne's recently headed back to California for a week to celebrate 30 years of wedded bliss, spending time with friends in The Sea Ranch and then in Pacific Grove, where they “got hitched” 30 years ago.

Here's a photo from their actual wedding ceremony on the edge of the ocean!

Best wishes to a special couple from SPOHNC for 30 more years of love and laughter!



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