

DON'T SKIP YOUR

Mammogram!



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How An Annual Mammogram at Greene County Medical Center Saved Jefferson Woman's Life

Judy Turner made it her routine to get her annual mammogram and wellness physical at Greene County Medical Center. Each fall the Jefferson resident would call the Family Medicine Clinic, to make her appointment with Sara Fleecs, ARNP, before calling the Radiology department to schedule her mammogram.

In the fall of 2019 Judy walked in to have her annual mammogram at Greene County Medical Center like she had many times before. She was greeted by the familiar face of the radiology technician who walked her back for her mammogram. Only 20 minutes later and Judy was on her way back home to start packing for her winter trip to Arizona that she takes each year. Not long after, she received a call from Sue Holden, the mammogram tech that had helped her at her appointment, with some stressful news. Judy's mammogram results had come back abnormal.

Judy went in for a second mammogram with the hopes that it was nothing, but when her second screening came back abnormal again, they sent her to Des Moines where she had a biopsy done. The next call that Judy received confirmed what she had feared; Judy had Breast Cancer.

"I come back to Greene County Medical Center every year to get my mammogram, and I tell everyone else to get one," said Judy. "When I got the call with the news that I had Breast Cancer, I was shocked, I don't even have any family history of Breast Cancer."

Judy's situation was not unusual though. More than 75% of women who get Breast Cancer have no family history of it, which is one reason why getting an annual mammogram is so important.

After Judy's biopsy in Des Moines she was worried that she would not be able to go to Arizona and would have to spend the cold winter here in Iowa. After discussing her worries with her provider Sara Fleecs, ARNP and the Greene County Medical Center Radiology department, they found the resources that would allow her to still go to Arizona and not postpone any treatments. Soon, Judy was on her way to Arizona to meet with doctors who could help her once she arrived.

Once in Arizona, Judy had surgery to remove the cancerous cells from her breast so that they could proceed with her treatment, which she hoped would not be chemotherapy.

"Luckily, the 3-D mammogram machine at Greene County Medical Center caught my cancer early and so I had surgery where they were able to get most of the cancer out, and then only 8 weeks of radiation."

The 3-D mammogram machine at Greene County Medical Center not only provides more comfort for the patient, but improves the technician's ability to get a crisp, clear image and provides better results. It also can provide the Tyrer-Cuzick Score, which helps providers estimate an individual's risk of developing Breast Cancer.

Once Judy finished her radiation and returned home to Jefferson, she was back to her routine of getting her annual wellness physicals and her mammograms, now every six months. Today, Judy is cancer free and continues to share her story with her friends and community, advocating for others to get their mammogram.

"Mammograms are not that bad, especially 3-D mammograms which are available at Greene County Medical Center. It is very important to get one every year no matter your age, I am just glad they caught mine early. I don't know that I would be here if I had not gotten my mammogram."