Everyday Moments Matter While Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer: Gerry's Story

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Gerry was just shy of her 48th birthday, when she did a self-exam in 2011 and felt a lump the size of a small egg in her left breast. She had a mammogram six months prior to this and felt fine – no pain, redness, discharge – but decided to take the precaution and visit her primary care doctor to get an exam. Nothing unusual showed up on the mammogram, to her relief, but she decided to get an ultrasound to put her mind at ease. It was then that her doctors saw the mass, and a biopsy later revealed her diagnosis of stage 3 lobular breast cancer.

As a single parent of three, her most immediate reaction to the news was how it would impact her children. She didn't tell her children about her diagnosis right away, but, one by one, she gave them the news.

"It was so tough," Gerry said. "After all, I was their only parent."

Her children supported her as she underwent a double mastectomy and reconstruction, followed by chemotherapy and radiation. But two years later, during a separate doctor visit for another health issue, a body scan revealed she was originally misdiagnosed, and had stage 4 cancer, also known as metastatic breast cancer (MBC), which cannot be cured. MBC is a more advanced form of breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body. In Gerry's case, her cancer had spread to her bones, followed by her reproductive organs, abdomen, gastrointestinal tract (including her colon and small intestine), and liver.

Women and men who live with MBC have separate challenges and needs than people who have early stage breast cancer. For them, MBC means they will have to undergo treatment for the rest of their lives, which carry the physical and emotional weight that comes with the disease. For Gerry, appreciating every day moments has been an important factor in helping her cope with the disease.

MBC is “a whole different ballgame,” Gerry said. “When I received that diagnosis, it was like my kids had to pick up the pieces again. I really had to start thinking about plans for my children because I knew my time was limited.”

Gerry underwent several rounds of chemotherapy and ended up switching medications a number of times. Then, her oncologist introduced her to HALAVEN® (eribulin mesylate). HALAVEN is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body, and who have already received other types of anticancer medicines after the cancer has spread.

“Together we decided that this would be a good option for me,” Gerry said. "Sometimes I do experience weakness and fatigue. Since I’ve been on HALAVEN, I’ve had to lower my dosage a couple of times.”

Before starting HALAVEN, Gerry’s oncologist went over all the benefits, risks, and possible side effects with her. HALAVEN can cause serious side effects including low white blood cell count (neutropenia) and numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands or feet (peripheral neuropathy). If a patient experiences side effects, their healthcare provider may delay or decrease the dose or stop treatment.

In a clinical study of more than 750 women, HALAVEN was compared with other chemotherapies or hormone therapies commonly used to treat MBC. Although some women lived longer and some women did not live as long, women who were treated with HALAVEN lived, on average, 25% longer (13.2 months vs 10.6 months, respectively) than those who received another chemotherapy or hormone treatment.

Since her diagnosis, Gerry has learned to live in the present and appreciate the big and small moments that matter. Whether it’s something as simple as being there while her kids get ready for work or as momentous as seeing her daughter graduate college, Gerry is appreciative of the time she gets to spend with her family.

“I’m so blessed to see my kids get this far – just sitting back and watching life happen and being a part of it – I’m really lucky,” Gerry said. “It’s a real gift to be able to be alive, and too often we take it for granted.”

To learn more about HALAVEN, visit www.Halaven.com or check out the HALAVEN community on Facebook at www.facebook.com/halaven.

What is HALAVEN (eribulin mesylate)?

HALAVEN is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body, and who have already received other types of anticancer medicines after the cancer has spread.

Important Safety Information for HALAVEN®

What safety information do I need to know about HALAVEN?

HALAVEN can cause serious side effects, including

- Low white blood cell count (neutropenia). This can lead to serious infections that could lead to death. Your health care provider will check your blood cell counts. Call your health care provider right away if you develop fever (temperature above 100.5°F), chills, cough, or burning or pain when you urinate, as any of these can be symptoms of infection
- Numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands or feet (peripheral neuropathy). Peripheral neuropathy is common with HALAVEN and sometimes can be severe. Tell your health care provider if you have new or worsening symptoms of peripheral neuropathy
- Your health care provider may delay or decrease your dose or stop treatment with HALAVEN if you have side effects

Before you receive HALAVEN, tell your health care provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you

- have liver or kidney problems
- have heart problems, including a problem called congenital long QT syndrome
- have low potassium or low magnesium in your blood
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. HALAVEN can harm your unborn baby. Tell your health care provider right away if you become pregnant or think you are pregnant during treatment with HALAVEN. Females who are able to become pregnant should use an effective form of birth control during treatment with HALAVEN and for at least 2 weeks after the final dose of HALAVEN and males should use an effective form of birth control when having sex with female partners who are able to become pregnant during treatment with HALAVEN and for 3½ months (14 weeks) after the final dose of HALAVEN
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if HALAVEN passes into your breast milk. Do not breastfeed during treatment with HALAVEN and for 2 weeks after the final dose of

HALAVEN

Tell your health care provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

What are the possible side effects of HALAVEN?

HALAVEN can cause changes in your heartbeat (called QT prolongation). This can cause irregular heartbeats. Your health care provider may do heart monitoring (electrocardiogram or ECG) or blood tests during your treatment with HALAVEN to check for heart problems.

The most common side effects of HALAVEN in adults with breast cancer include low white blood cell count (neutropenia), low red blood cell count (anemia), weakness or tiredness, hair loss (alopecia), nausea, and constipation.

Your health care provider will do blood tests before and during treatment while you are taking HALAVEN.

For more information about HALAVEN, please see full Prescribing Information.

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