

# BEATING THE ODDS



**Deb Peska has a spring in her step and a smile on her face. She also has breast cancer, which her mother and her grandmother also had.**

But the 53-year-old Toledo woman credits two key allies since her diagnosis: Vincent Reid, MD, oncologic surgeon at Mercy's Hall-Perrine Cancer Center, and MarginProbe®, a new advanced technology used in early-stage breast lumpectomy surgeries.

Deb was on alert for breast cancer for years. Her mother and grandmother discovered their breast cancer when each was 62. So, Deb had regular mammograms, did self-examinations daily and came to Mercy every six months to check calcifications in her right breast.

A routine mammogram detected cancer in her left breast on Dec. 26 when she was 52. A biopsy identified the small tumor as invasive carcinoma, but it was at Stage One, an early form of cancer.

Because of her family history, Deb underwent genetic testing to determine if her cancer is hereditary; it's not.

"That was good to know," she says. "My sons were very relieved because it can cause breast cancer and prostate cancer in men."

Dr. Reid performed Deb's lumpectomy surgery on Jan. 26. Using MarginProbe, Dr. Reid was able to remove the lump and conclusively determine that the surrounding tissue was cancer-free.

"When he told me that, it gave me such great peace of mind," Deb recalls.

MarginProbe allows surgeons to discover whether cancer is present in the tissue during surgery, instead of waiting several days for a pathology report. Having a "clean margin" around the cancer site increases



DEB PESKA, 53, IS GRATEFUL FOR THE PEACE OF MIND SHE HAS SINCE ONCOLOGIC SURGEON DR. VINCENT REID USED MARGINPROBE, A NEW ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY USED IN BREAST LUMPECTOMY SURGERIES.

the likelihood of a successful outcome and eliminates the need for a second, follow-up surgery.

Mercy is the first hospital in Iowa to use MarginProbe. Dr. Reid has seen the difference it can make in his own practice.

Between January and November 2013, he says, "my personal re-incision rate before using MarginProbe was 14.93 percent. Currently, using MarginProbe, it stands at zero percent after 29 cases. That's a significant drop-off."

Avoiding follow-up surgery eases the risk of infection, additional scarring and emotional and financial cost, Dr. Reid adds.

"That one act has a major impact on the patient," he says. "Everything you can give a patient for more reassurance is important."

Deb agrees, noting, "My mother and grandmother didn't have that tool available in their time. I felt very honored to be a MarginProbe candidate."

Since her diagnosis, she has not missed a day of work as Tama County coordinator for the Northeast Iowa Agency on Aging, coordinating events and daily meals for seniors at the Toledo Community Center and delivering hot meals.

"They're my therapy. They need me," Deb says. "That's what gets me out of bed and one foot in front of the other."

That, and the great care from Hall-Perrine Cancer Center. "They call to check on me," she explains. "I feel like they're just all family."

As part of her complete treatment plan, Deb began chemotherapy and radiation this spring. But she's focused on some important milestones: her first granddaughter's birth in May; finishing chemo and radiation treatments by the

Fourth of July; and her son's wedding Aug. 16.

"You need to stay positive and keep smiling," she says. "That's why I'm going to beat this thing."



Vincent Reid, MD  
Oncologic Surgeon  
Hall-Perrine Cancer Center

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Learn more about MarginProbe and Mercy's cancer services  
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