

Case History

Sue (not her real name), a 69 year old female, visited Dr. Steven Drosman's office on 6/14/06 for her annual well woman exam. She underwent the HALO® Breast Pap Test, producing Nipple Aspirate Fluid from her left breast. On 6/19/06 her HALO sample was viewed by a pathologist, with findings of atypical cells present. Sue's prior screening mammograms were all normal. She was then referred to a surgeon who requested that she have a diagnostic mammogram and ultrasound of her left breast before seeing him. She had the diagnostic mammogram and ultrasound on 8/07/06 which showed "no solid mass or dilated duct." On 8/21/06, he noted that she did not have a family history, she had a low risk of breast cancer on the Gail model, and no suggestion of cancer whatsoever. Then, on 9/20/07, as part of Sue's follow-up, she had a digital mammogram. There were noted calcifications in the 12 o'clock position of the left breast and a follow up digital mammogram with spot magnification was ordered. On 10/20/07, Sue's follow up mammogram confirmed microcalcifications in the 12 o'clock position of the left breast and she was scheduled for a stereotactic core biopsy of her left breast on 11/2/07. The results of the biopsy were Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS). The patient was then referred to a surgical oncologist who recommended surgery and radiation therapy.

Comments by Dr. Steven Drosman

Sue is like so many of my patients who have no identifiable risk factors for breast cancer. In the past, we've had to just wait for lesions to develop that were large enough to be seen on a screening mammogram or to be felt on a breast exam. Cellular atypia is a significant risk factor for developing breast cancer. HALO® helps us stratify patients according to risk level so we can get the right women to the breast specialists for follow up, with the goal of catching abnormalities earlier in the disease process.

Comments by Sue

I'll be honest, the abnormal HALO results initially caused me some anxiety, but it was so worth it! It made me much more conscientious about breast exams and getting my mammograms on time, plus I had the benefit of consulting with a breast specialist. Thanks to HALO my cancer was caught early before it had a chance to spread beyond the milk duct, and my prognosis is great.

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