



Central Illinois

# Patient-Centered Care

A diagnosis of cancer can be terrifying. The medical team at the Breast Center at SIU School of Medicine, located in the Simmons Cancer Institute, understands and is here to help.

**W**hen you have been diagnosed with breast cancer, you want answers. Fast.

It can often take weeks to see a doctor. Not at the Breast Center at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine's Simmons Cancer Institute. "After a breast biopsy, a patient is immediately informed of a cancer diagnosis, and can be seeing a surgeon to discuss treatment options within 72 hours," says Gary Dunnington, MD, Chair of the SIU Department of Surgery and Medical Director at the Breast Center. "Those can be the longest days of a patient's life, and we don't want them to last any longer than they have to."

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Get the free mobile app at <http://gettag.mobi>

After surgery, the entire team meets to discuss the patient and develop a consensus for her treatment based on the most current, peer-reviewed research. The patient then meets with all the necessary specialists in

the same clinic, on the same day, rather than going from office to office and appointment to appointment.

"What could have taken three weeks of multiple appointments at multiple places, we can accomplish in two or three hours of quality time," says Dr. Dunnington.

Patient navigators also meet with patients to help identify potential non-medical issues, such as transportation. They continue to track patients throughout their entire course of treatment and recovery, assisted by the Breast Center staff.

## The Whole You

One of the best reflections of teamwork among a breast cancer care team is a high rate of cancer treatment that saves the breast (lumpectomy and radiation) as well as a high rate of breast reconstruction when mastectomy is needed.

"Our rate of greater than 75 percent breast conservation and approximately 60 percent reconstruction with mastectomy is one of the highest in the region," says Dr. Dunnington.



Sara Mansfield, ACMS Certified Cancer Trainer and research study staff member, (above left) monitors a participant.

## Breast Center Research

Recently, Laura Rogers, MD, MPH, associate professor of internal medicine, was awarded a \$3.5 million federal grant from the National Cancer Institute to study how well exercise improves physical fitness, quality of life, fatigue, and joint dysfunction in breast cancer survivors.

"A team of breast cancer researchers at the Breast Center work to find new answers to challenging questions regarding best approaches to diagnosis and treatment," says Dr. Dunnington.



The Breast Center at SIU School of Medicine was recently awarded

the highest level of accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers.

"We all work together.  
We're in one facility.  
We're all focused on  
breast cancer."

— Dr. Gary Dunnington

To schedule an appointment call 217-545-7432  
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 **SIU School of Medicine**  
Simmons Cancer Institute