

HOPE & HEALING

A guide to helping survivors navigate through their journey

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Spring 2022 Issue

Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Call Center: [404.531.4444](tel:404.531.4444)



Does Mobile Health Have a Place in Cancer Care and Survivorship?

By: Sara Stewart, RN, BSN, OCN, ONN-CG

Our world has increasingly become like the futuristic television shows of the 1970s, “Dr. Who,” “Land of the Lost” and “Star Trek.” One study estimated that approximately 90% of American adults own a cell phone, and about 70% of Americans own a phone with app capabilities.¹ Applications or apps as they are more commonly known, allow users to play games, track steps, connect to social media outlets, listen to music and so much more.

Mobile Health (mHealth) apps are a growing field being increasingly studied for use in improving patient outcomes both during and after cancer treatment.² The prevalence of smartphones and consumer wearables such as Fitbit® and the advancements in data potentially captured is of particular interest as we head toward the future of personalized medicine. Consumer wearables have the ability to capture data including heart rate, electrocardiogram data, sleep, oxygen saturation, ultraviolet exposure and physical activity as well as the ability to allow patients to report symptoms in real-time.³

mHealth apps with a base in behavioral science are the most successful apps because they are simple, intuitive to use, provide tailored information and actionable insights based on data collected, can share data with designated individuals and provide awards and incentives for milestones.¹ The application chemoWave: Cancer Health Diary®, for example, provides tracking of symptoms, medication reminders and allows users to share data with health care providers. The application also correlates symptoms with other health indicators such as sleep, water intake and activity, providing real-time advice on the data collected.³

Disease-specific education and a safe environment in which to discuss difficult topics (like recurrence, sexuality and long-term side effects) were valuable parts of an app for young adult cancer survivors.⁴ The app allowed young adult survivors to join peer support groups, watch videos made by other survivors, organize information and track physical symptoms like pain and stress. Similar apps have become available, but few include social and practical capabilities. Mend Together®, CaringBridge® and My Lifeline® are examples of apps where patients can find communities, create support groups, create volunteer calendars for assistance or meals and share information in a controlled environment. Many advocacy groups, including the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the Cancer Support Community, BreastCancer.org and Livestrong have created apps that contain cancer dictionaries, diagnosis guides and support community apps with tailored information and support tools.

Apps such as TapCloud® allow connection to electronic medical record (EMR) systems; however, these capabilities are still not widely used, and it is often up to the patient to give information to the provider. There is still much research to be done on how to engage users and include providers for the best possible outcomes and quality of life for patients. Personally, I am still waiting on them to invent the transporter. “Beam me up, Scotty!”

References:

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2. Hernandez Silva E, Lawler S & Langbecker D. *J Cancer Surviv*. 2019; 13:97-107. doi: 10.1007/s11764-018-0730-8.
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ASK OUR EXPERT



Cardio-Oncology With Lalitha C. Medepalli MD, FACC, FASE, RPVI

Dr. Medepalli is the first physician in the Atlanta region and the second in Georgia to receive board certification in cardio-oncology from the International Cardio-Oncology Society.

Can you please explain what cardio-oncology is?

Cardio-oncology focuses on assessing the cardiovascular health of patients with cancer before treatment to optimize the management of pre-existing cardiac diseases and ultimately, decrease cardiovascular complications during and after cancer therapy. Northside Hospital in collaboration with the Northside Hospital Cancer Institute and the Northside Hospital Heart Institute established a [cardio-oncology](#) program this year. The establishment of this program is a keystone step in achieving the overall goal of an integrated and comprehensive care model involving a multidisciplinary team of providers, which is necessary to achieve better outcomes for our patients and survivors.

What are some of the common cardiovascular side effects related to current cancer therapies?

Cardiovascular complications of cancer therapy may include but are not limited to myocardial dysfunction/heart failure, coronary artery disease, valvular disease and arrhythmias. Certain arrhythmias can be drug-induced, which may cause electrocardiogram abnormalities like QT-prolongation, fluid around the heart (pericardial effusion) and elevated blood pressure.

Do certain treatment therapies or medications put a survivor more at risk for cardiovascular side effects?

One-third of cancer survivors die from cardiovascular disease as per the survivorship data. Survivors who have received a special group of cancer drugs like anthracycline and/or radiotherapy should be engaged in a cardiovascular protective surveillance program, but in reality, every cancer survivor should be engaged in this type of program.

How can survivors optimize their cardiac health?

By being proactive and engaging in cardiovascular risk reduction strategies, such as maintaining a healthy weight, getting regular exercise and managing stress. Additionally, survivors should work with their primary care providers, oncologists and cardio-oncologists to optimize their cardiac health.



How can a patient or survivor obtain a referral?

There are two convenient ways to request a patient consultation:

Phone: Contact the nurse navigator at **404.263.2753**.

Online: Northside Hospital Cancer Institute (NHCI) network providers can request a consultation by visiting the cardio-oncology section on the NHCI Intranet.

Do you have a question you would like answered by an expert or a story to share in a future issue of Hope & Healing? If so, please send your questions or stories to survivornewsletter@northside.com.

Upcoming Cancer Awareness Months

April: Testicular Cancer, Oral, Head, & Neck Cancer and Esophageal Cancer

May: Bladder Cancer, Brain Tumor and Melanoma/Skin Cancer

June: National Cancer Survivor Month



BOOST YOUR HEALTH & WELLNESS



Will Eating Mushrooms Really Help Reduce the Risk of Cancer?

By: Beth Battle, RDN, CSO, LD

To begin, a little nutrition humor: Who would be the best food to hang out with: a strawberry, a banana or a mushroom? A mushroom of course because he is a fun-gi.

There are over 10,000 known types of mushrooms. Mushrooms are classified in the vegetable category per dietary recommendations, but they are actually a type of fungus. One cup of mushrooms provides 15 calories and 2.2 grams of protein. The role of mushrooms in diets and health has been documented throughout human history. Early Greek, Egyptian, Roman, Chinese and Mexican civilizations valued mushrooms as a culinary delicacy and as medicine.

Mushrooms are a good source of antioxidants, fiber, vitamins and minerals. They can also provide close to 400 international units (IU) of vitamin D in three raw ounces (if exposed to ultraviolet light from the sun or sunlamp for a few hours before harvest or 15 minutes after harvest). The body turns vitamin D₂ into the active form of vitamin D, which it needs to absorb calcium and keep bones healthy. Vitamin D has also been reported to have anticancer activities against many cancer types, including breast cancer.

Antioxidants protect cells from damage that can cause cancer. The body makes some of the antioxidants that it uses, but it relies on foods like fruits, vegetables and grains, to obtain the rest of the antioxidants it needs. Beta-glucans, a soluble fiber found in mushrooms, can boost the immune system and may help the body fight cancer, infection or other diseases. Per the research, higher mushroom consumption was associated with a lower risk of total cancer, especially breast cancer.

One of the most studied mushrooms is the reishi. The reported benefits of this mushroom are many, including, preventing aging and enhancing the immune system, treatment of cancer and treatment of the flu. Evidence from

many studies has demonstrated that reishi may have anti-cancer benefits as well. While there is no strong evidence to justify the use of reishi mushrooms as the main treatment for cancer, it could be given along with treatment to potentially enhance tumor response and immunity. The difficulty, at this point, is translating Eastern practices into acceptable evidence-based Western therapies. Because most supplements, like mushroom supplements, are not regulated, it is important to use products that have a third-party testing certification to ensure the product contains what the label says. Major third-party testers include [US Pharmacopeia](#), [NSF International](#) and [ConsumerLab.com](#).

Per the American Institute of Cancer Research, no single food can protect one against cancer alone. Research shows that a diet filled with a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and other plant foods helps lower one's risk for many cancers. Mushrooms can be included in a healthy diet with a variety of other plant foods!



Oncology nutrition services are available throughout many of our NHCI locations. Please call **404.236.8036**.

Recipe Corner: Brown Rice with Mushrooms (6 servings)

Ingredients:

2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
(use margarine for lower saturated fat)
½ onion, chopped
¼ cup chopped crimini mushrooms
(or mushroom of choice)
1 cup long-grain brown rice
1 ½ cups low-sodium chicken broth

Directions:

1. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add the onion and mushrooms and cook, stirring, until softened, 5 minutes.
3. Add the rice and continue to cook until the rice is coated and slightly toasted, 1-2 minutes.
4. Add the broth and bring to a boil; cover, reduce the heat and simmer until the rice is tender and all the liquid is absorbed, about 45 minutes.
5. Let the rice sit off the heat for a few minutes, then serve.

Nutritional value per serving (1/2 cup serving): Calories 150, Total Fat 4.5 grams, Sodium 20 milligrams, Carbohydrates 23 grams, Dietary Fiber 1 gram, Protein 3 grams

Recipe from: The Lahey Clinic Guide to Cooking Through Cancer





Difficulty Swallowing? Reasons Why and General Management Tips

By: Alexandra A. Mooney, MEd, CCC-SLP

Occasionally, patients undergoing cancer treatment may have trouble swallowing.

The medical term for this is dysphagia. Dysphagia can present as difficulty swallowing food, liquid, saliva and/or medications. The cause of dysphagia may be directly related to the location of the cancer but can also be related to treatment side effects.

Some common symptoms of dysphagia are:

- Difficulty chewing
- Drooling or difficulty containing food/liquid inside the mouth
- Difficulty initiating a swallow or opening mouth
- Coughing or choking while eating or drinking
- Frequent throat clearing while eating or drinking
- Gurgly, wet voice after swallowing
- Dry mouth
- Heartburn and/or indigestion
- Feeling as though food is stuck in the throat or chest
- Feeling as though food is coming back up into the throat or mouth
- Painful swallowing
- Change in taste

Persistent difficulty in swallowing can result in malnutrition and dehydration and increase the risk of developing aspiration pneumonia, which can impact overall health. The good news is that help is available to prevent and manage any swallowing difficulties. A speech-language pathologist can help develop a treatment plan based on the cause of the swallowing difficulty.

Conservative treatment options include: modifications to the types of food textures or thickness of liquids consumed, positional strategies, medications and general eating strategies (such as simply alternating bites with sips). Exercise therapy has also been successful in treating swallowing difficulties and preventing and minimizing the effect of some treatment side effects on swallow function.

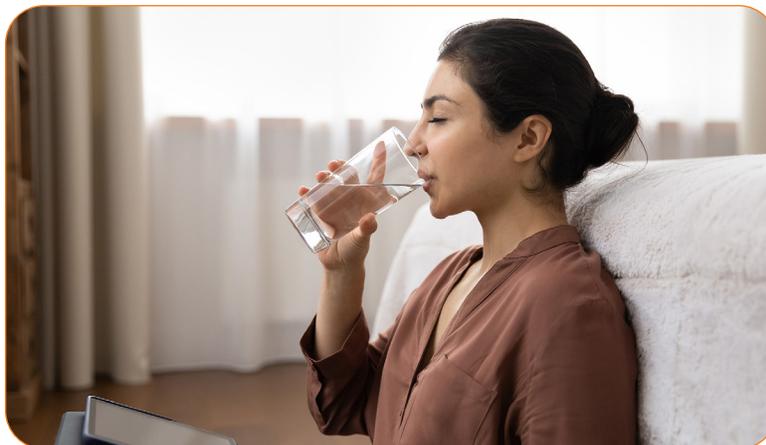
Additionally, there are surgical options that may be indicated, if needed.

General safety precautions to take when eating and drinking include:

- Sitting fully upright during meals, and staying upright for 30 minutes to one hour after finishing a meal
- Slowing down when eating and drinking
- Taking smaller bites and sips
- Maintaining good oral care by brushing and flossing teeth regularly, and keeping up with dental appointments

Patients with a lung cancer diagnosis or individuals using oxygen should remember that swallowing and breathing cannot occur at the same time. In these situations, it is best to take breaths between bites to conserve energy. Patients having trouble swallowing should contact their medical team for support and advice on how to manage nutritional intake throughout their cancer journey.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Rehabilitation Services (including virtual visits) offered at Northside Hospital. A physician referral is required for therapy services. Call **404.236.8030** with any questions or to schedule an in-person or virtual appointment.





STORIES OF HOPE & HEALING*

Survivor Story: Meet Stacey



What are the events that led to your cancer diagnosis?

In October of 2019, I was putting on a bra and noticed a lump. It felt exactly like a lemon seed, the same size and everything. I made an appointment to see my OB/GYN right away and shortly after, had a diagnostic mammogram and ultrasound. Nothing showed on either test at that time. I felt comfortable just keeping an eye on it, but that turned out to be a mistake. Fast forward a year to the fall of 2020. I noticed the lump had gotten larger, about the size of a peanut M&M®. My co-workers (yes, we discuss everything) encouraged me to go back and get a biopsy. I went back two weeks later for a mammogram and ultrasound again, and this time it showed up and looked serious. Five biopsies later, I had a breast cancer diagnosis after a PET scan and another biopsy. At age 45, I found out I already had stage IV disease.

What treatment did you receive?

I was started on Zoladex® (goserelin implant) and Xgeva® (denosumab) shots monthly and Ibrance® (palbociclib) daily. I am also participating in the [AMEERA-5](#) trial to evaluate an oral selective estrogen receptor degrader (SERD) called amcenestrant. It is a double-blind trial though, which means I do not know whether I am taking the study medication amcenestrant or letrozole.

Describe your experience as a patient participant in a clinical trial.

Being in a clinical trial has been great. The minute my oncologist, Dr. Gena Volas-Redd said, "I have a trial for you if you're interested," I thought, "Yes!" It gives me a lot of hope to know that new drugs are being developed for breast cancer and being a part of the process is like paying it forward to future generations. I previously thought that trials were kind of like last resorts or that travel was required, but this is my first treatment, and it is in the city where I live. The downside is all the blood draws, which the nurses joke about, but it is not too bad.

How and where did you receive support during your treatment and recovery?

My biggest source of support has been my husband. I am also super lucky to have my kids, parents, mother-in-law (who is a two-time breast cancer survivor), co-workers (who also include breast cancer survivors) and online support groups, including one just for people taking Ibrance® to compare experiences.



Did you utilize patient support resources at Northside? If so, which would you recommend?

I spoke to a social worker at Georgia Cancer Specialists and had help finding deductible assistance to help with some of the costs that first year. I would recommend asking about financial services; there is a lot of help out there, and it can be very overwhelming.

What advice do you have for someone navigating their treatment and recovery journey?

I have so much advice!

- Advocate for yourself.
- It is hard but keep asking questions until you are satisfied with the answers.
- Choose a team that you are 100% comfortable with. You will be with them for the long haul, and it is important to feel heard and feel like your doctors are fighting for you.
- Take care of your mental health.
- Ask for help.
- Treat yourself like someone you love.

How far out are you from treatment or is treatment ongoing?

My treatment is ongoing. Since I am stage IV, I will be on treatment for life. I am 14 months in and doing well, so hopefully that will remain the case for a long time to come.

Closing Thoughts

Thank you for featuring someone with stage IV disease as a survivor story! Many of us with metastatic breast cancer feel that we are not, or will never be, survivors. My take on it is that I survived yesterday, therefore I am a cancer survivor.

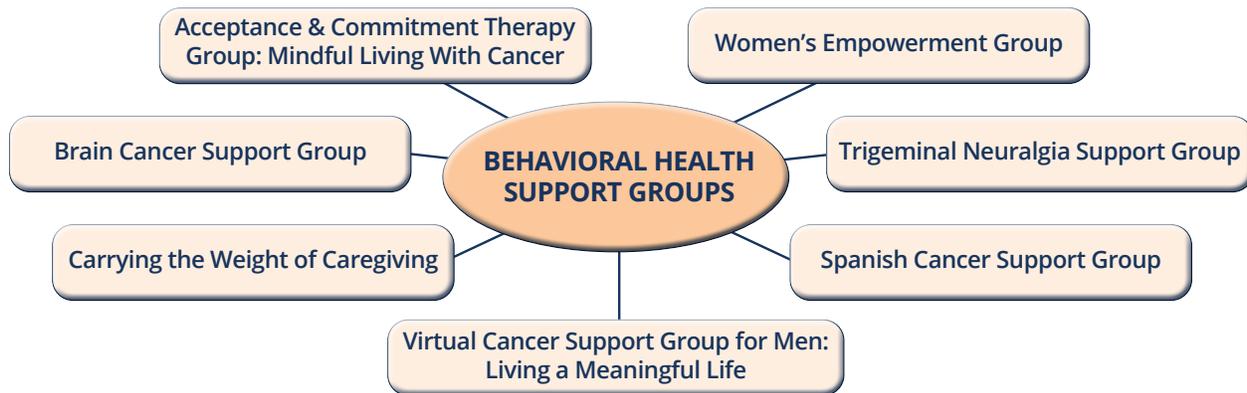
*Patients' stories are based on individual experiences. The process from diagnosis through treatment may vary as well as symptoms, side effects and provider recommendations.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Support Groups Offer Encouragement to Survivors and Caregivers

Northside Hospital has expanded its behavioral health support group offerings. Click [here](#) for groups schedules and additional information.



Cancer Support Community Atlanta will reopen for in-person classes on Monday, April 18, 2022. The new location is in the Center Pointe Building 2 on the lower level in Suite LL90 located at 1100 Johnson Ferry Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30342. Please click [here](#) for additional information on the grand reopening.



In Their Own Words

Survivors share the impact that Cancer Support Community (CSC) Atlanta support groups have had throughout their journeys.

"I was diagnosed in February 2019 with breast cancer and in August 2020 with endometrial cancer (second cancer rather than a metastasis). When you receive a cancer diagnosis, life as it was, becomes a distant memory. Your full-time job is clarifying, through the distortions of the unknowns and fears, a temporary detour from what your life was to now navigating your diagnosis, treatment, and recovery, all of which occur on a very steep learning curve. During these extremely turbulent times, it was a lifeline to be able to connect with women who were experiencing or had experienced what I was going through and be able to share with them my deepest thoughts and fears – without judgment. They were always positive in their responses and shared their feelings and thoughts very openly and honestly. By their willingness to share, it reinforced for me that my thoughts, concerns, fears, and feelings were 'normal,' and I was not alone! Just as important was being able to exchange information about our doctors and treatment plans, and what was working (or not) for them. Nothing is more important or can take the place of women sharing – especially a group of women who have now joined you in the battle to stay alive!

– Linda Lockhart

"'You have cancer.' For millions, these words are the start of a life-altering journey. Each journey is unique, yet we don't have to travel it alone. When I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, I was terrified. When I had no courage of my own, others were strong for me - family, friends, spiritual advisors, my medical team and most of all, my new family in cancer support. Sharing our journeys, each a roller coaster of ups and downs, hopes and fears and pain, laughter and tears. I reclaimed courage. I reclaimed peace and joy."

– Cindy Paleveda Little

"Our survivorship group has been one of the most important events in my life since my cancer treatments. There was an immediate closeness and connection as we've shared our experiences and most especially supported each other. Through tears and laughter, we bolster each other because we share a unique experience that others in our lives can never understand (and we wouldn't want them to). Last week's group reinforced these thoughts when a new member joined who needed support and in our giving it, we all received reassurance as well that our connection to each other was strong and so important."

– Linda Niles

Support groups at CSC Atlanta are available to everyone impacted by cancer, including a special group for caregivers. The groups are held in a hybrid format, so there is a choice as to how to join—in person or via video chat. Click [here](#) to learn more and see the specific support groups offered.



EVENTS & CANCER CELEBRATIONS

CANCER SCREENING & PREVENTION

Skin Cancer Screening

May 5, 2022 @ Northside Hospital Cancer Support Center – Gwinnett from 6-8 p.m.

May 19, 2022 @ Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Radiation Oncology – Forsyth from 6-8 p.m.

Built To Quit – Smoking and Tobacco Cessation Course

Next 6-week session start date: April 26, 2022

Weekly classes include the American Lung Association Freedom from Smoking curriculum and are currently web-based. They are conducted primarily in a group setting, which encourages participants to learn from each other.



Resources to help you stop smoking and using tobacco

Prostate Cancer Screening

June 16, 2022 @ Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Radiation Oncology – Cherokee from 5:30-8 p.m.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

NHCI-SPONSORED CANCER WALK/EVENTS

Sarcoma Foundation of America Race to Cure Sarcoma Atlanta 2022

April 23, 2022, from 8 a.m.-noon
@ Suwanee Town Center

PanCAN PurpleStride Walk

April 30, 2022 @ 7:30 a.m. @ Westside Park in Atlanta

LUNgevity eRace

May 1-31, 2022 – Virtual

East Georgia Cancer Coalition Miles for Moms Run/Walk 5K

May 7, 2022 @ 8 a.m. – Virtual

It's The Journey Georgia 5K Run for Breast Cancer

May 7, 2022 @ 8 a.m. @ The Shoppes at River Crossing in Macon

United Way ACE Classic – Tennis & Golf

May 9, 2022 @ 9:45 a.m. @ Idle Hour Country Club in Macon

American Lung Association Fight for Air Climb

June 4, 2022 @ 8 a.m. @ Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta

Harts of Teal 2nd Annual 5K & 1M Color Run:

Giving a Voice to the Whisper of Ovarian Cancer

July 9, 2022 @ 8:30 a.m. @ One Church in Fayetteville

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY RELAY FOR LIFE EVENTS

Relay for Life Forsyth

April 23, 2022, from noon-6 p.m. @ Cumming Fairgrounds in Cumming

Relay for Life Cobb

April 23, 2022, from 3-9 p.m. @ Larry Bell Park in Marietta

Relay for Life Oconee-Clarke

April 29, 2022, from 6-10 p.m. @ Oconee County Middle School in Watkinsville

Relay for Life Henry County

April 29, 2022, from 6 p.m.-midnight @ Salem Baptist Church Park in McDonough

Relay for Life Walton

April 29, 2022 @ Monroe Area High School

Relay for Life Hall County

April 30, 2022, from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. @ University of North Georgia in Oakwood

Relay for Life Bibb County

May 6, 2022 @ Central City Park in Macon

Relay for Life Fayette County

May 6, 2022, from 6-10 p.m. @ 201 McIntosh Trail in Peachtree City

Relay for Life Gwinnett

May 7, 2022, from 4-10 p.m. @ Lanier High School in Sugar Hill

Relay for Life Atlanta

May 13, 2022, from 6-10 p.m. @ North Atlanta High School in Atlanta



COMMUNITY EVENTS

NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL FOUNDATION EVENTS

29th Annual Charity Golf Classic

May 16, 2022 @ the Golf Club of Georgia
Benefiting the Blood and Marrow Transplant Program
Click [here](#) to volunteer.

Cancer Survivor Celebration

June 5, 2022 @ 2 p.m. @ Zoo Atlanta
Click [here](#) to register to attend.
Click [here](#) to volunteer.

NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL EVENTS

For questions and to RSVP for these events, please contact [Kymerly Duncan](#).

Young Women’s Initiative Survivorship Series presented in partnership with Living Beyond Breast Cancer (LBBC)

May 14, 2022, from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
@ Northside Hospital Cherokee
Session 1: Hot and Bothered: Coping with Early Menopause & Stay Alert: Managing the Long-Term Side Effects

June 11, 2022, from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
@ Northside Hospital Cherokee
Session 2: Self-Care After Breast Cancer & Let’s Talk About Sex and Breast Cancer

CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY EVENTS



Interventional Pulmonology and Oncology

April 21, 2022, from noon-1 p.m. – Virtual
Featuring: Dr. Venkatesh Lakshminarayanan, Director of the Interventional Pulmonary Program at Northside Hospital
Moderated by: Melissa Morrison, NP, Clinical Coordinator for the Lung Cancer Program at Northside Hospital Cancer Institute

Advances in the Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer

April 28, 2022, from noon-1 p.m. – Virtual
Featuring: Dr. Eddie K. Abdalla, Medical Director, Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Liver & Pancreas Program

Cancer Support Community Chastain Chase 5K

May 22, 2022 from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. @ Chastain Park Red Lot



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