

TheBreastCareSite.com
Above and Beyond Profile
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Shenin M. Sachedina, DO
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Dr. Shenin Sachedina's medical expertise is evident in her role as a general surgeon specializing in benign and malignant breast disease. She passionately enjoys her work, and does everything within her power to make sure her patients deal with as little stress, fear and confusion as possible as they navigate their way through a breast cancer diagnosis.

When asked how she became involved in this field of endeavor, Dr. Sachedina remembers: "I was doing general surgery, when I was just about ready to finish my program. I didn't feel like I had a solid grasp of breast disease, so I went to M.D. Anderson in Houston and worked with Dr. Eva Singletary. This lady is just amazing! She was my sole inspiration for getting into this field. When she is teaching, it's obvious she loves what she does. I truly believe that God put her in my path to do what I do. She has been my mentor. Even today I call her if I come up against something where I feel I need some additional input."

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Dr. Sachedina continues by saying "I fell in love with the whole concept of breast disease, and felt I could make a difference. It wasn't really a personal issue, because breast cancer has not been a big problem within my immediate family. It's just that I love what I do! Things never stagnate when it comes to breast cancer treatments. There is change from year to year, which makes being involved very stimulating and rewarding. There is always something new in the realm of chemotherapy and clinical trials, much of which is very exciting, because I know these developments will help some of my patients."

"When you love what you do, it translates into quality work, and hopefully, a really great outcome for my patients. I want to take care of them. I want to do it well. I tend to try to identify what we need to do and stay ahead of the game. For instance, we had a problem in Florida in getting mammography for our patients, so we had a mammogram unit installed here in our

office to assist them. We have brought other modalities in-house just to better serve our patients. “

An area of particular interest to Dr. Sachedina involves stereotactic procedures. A new product that she finds very exciting involves the ATEC® system, which allows for a Stereotactic-guided biopsy. This new method for breast cancer diagnosis is becoming more popular because a biopsy can be done quickly, and in a minimally invasive manner. With Stereotactic-guided breast biopsies, difficult to see breast abnormalities can be found and biopsied in a fast, safe and easy way without taking women to surgery for what is often a non-cancerous diagnosis.

Dr. Sachedina is particularly enthusiastic about this process because “all of the tissue samples are caught in a little basket at the end of the needle, so you don’t lose any of them. This means you get nearly 100% of the sample, which equates to a better diagnosis. When I go to the operating room with a patient, I have already done my workup, so we know that the patient needs a surgical procedure. This is not true with about 95% of surgeons. That’s why these sorts of biopsies are going to change how women with breast abnormalities are treated in very positive ways! On the most simplistic level, I am pleased with these new developments, because it means that fewer women will have to be taken into an operating room just to have a biopsy. To my way of thinking, this is a giant step in the right direction!”

Another of Dr. Sachedina’s passions is an emerging organization started just this January, called JAWA (Just Another Woman Assisting). JAWA is poised to provide service in areas currently overlooked for women dealing with breast cancer who are under 45 years of age. It will not be unusual for a JAWA volunteer to pick up the phone, call a woman dealing with treatment, and say “what can we do for you today?” Perhaps the woman has children in daycare and needs help paying the fees because of her medical bills. JAWA will visit women in the hospital to determine how they are going to cope with family and children. JAWA will be there when a family is in crisis.

Dr. Sachedina is also highly involved in making sure young women pay attention when it comes to breast health. Her youngest patient to date was a 23 year old with no history of breast cancer. She feels that a lot of young women are misdiagnosed because of their age. “I had a young woman; I think she was about 31, come to see me because she had been told she had an abscess. When I saw her ultrasound, I could tell she had cancer. I had another young woman who had been told she had a cyst. I knew it wasn’t a cyst, and that she needed a biopsy. Women who have breast cancer in their 30s are a whole different ballgame. They need to be treated much more aggressively.”

When asked what her advice would be to women who have breast cancer, Dr. Sachedina feels “you should make sure you are very informed about everything that happens to you. Don’t let fear make your choices. Remember that breast cancer detected early has the best chance of full recovery. If you find a lump, be aggressive. If you have a mammogram that is questionable, check it out. Be proactive. For women who are undergoing treatment, try to keep your life as normal as possible. Go to work, live your life – that’s what you are fighting for!”

Dr. Sachedina also has strong opinions about older women with breast cancer. “No matter what your age, if you have node positive disease, and they say there is even a 5% benefit to having chemotherapy, then do it! Women are living longer, there is a potential to live longer, so I wouldn’t give up just because of age.”

Husband, Jasani Aziz and children Aman (4-1/2) and Aznin (2) are another part of Dr. Sachedina's life about which she is passionate. "I love being a mom. My son, Aman just amazes me. He is already doing addition, subtraction and multiplication. I work with him every night. My daughter is equally remarkable; there is nothing she won't be able to achieve!"

When asked about hobbies, Dr. Sachedina hopes that one of these days she will be able to take up Tai Chi. She is also interested in decorating classes, as well as painting and photography. For the moment, she finds fulfillment and great satisfaction in helping her patients, and in spending time with her family.

In a long distance phone interview, former patient Terry Ernest's admiration and respect for Dr. Sachedina are more than evident! Dr. Sachedina treated her five years ago for breast cancer. Although she now lives in Texas, Terry says "if I had the bad luck to have my cancer return, I would go back to Florida to have Dr. Sachedina handle my care. She is the sort of doctor who will not operate on you until she has given you a hug and talks to you about the procedure. She is so caring and compassionate. She came to see me before and after my surgery. Another thing I really appreciate about the way she treats her patients is that she always tries to make sure you get your biopsy results just as quickly as possible. Having breast cancer was horrible, but having it bring Dr. Sachedina into my life was a Godsend!"