New Non-Surgical Breast Lump Treatment

Offering Women an Excellent Alternative

By: Roxanne Jones

Right before she relocated from North Carolina to Palm Desert earlier this year, Jennifer Elliott, 47, underwent a routine mammogram that detected a mass in her breast. Her doctor was confident that it was a benign breast tumor called a fibroadenoma — the most common type of breast lump. In fact, 1.5 million women are diagnosed with breast fibroadenomas every year.

“I decided to have it taken care of after I moved,” says Elliott. “So once I got here, I scheduled an appointment with a surgeon who was going to biopsy the tumor [to confirm it was benign] and remove it. However, my appointment was cancelled because the surgeon left the practice and I was referred to the Eisenhower Schnitzer/Novack Breast Center.

“It’s amazing how things work out,” she adds, “because at the Breast Center, I learned about a procedure called cryoablation for which I might be a candidate instead of having surgery to remove the lump.”

Cryoablation is a non-surgical procedure during which the physician uses ultrasound imaging to guide a small hollow needle (also called a probe) into the fibroadenoma, under local anesthesia. Liquid nitrogen is injected through the needle, freezing the tumor to minus 160 degrees Centigrade, which destroys the tissue. The procedure — which takes just 10 to 15 minutes — is virtually painless.

“After the needle is removed, the tumor decreases in size during the next three to six months and eventually disappears as it is absorbed naturally by the body,” explains John Cutrone, MD, a Board Certified Radiologist specializing in breast imaging and Medical Director of the Eisenhower Schnitzer/Novak Breast Center. “The patient doesn’t need general anesthesia, and the scar from the needle is tiny — about one quarter of an inch — versus one-to-two inches with surgery.”

Fortunately, a needle biopsy confirmed that Elliott’s tumor was a benign fibroadenoma, and she was a candidate for cyroablation. In fact, she became the very first patient to undergo the procedure at Eisenhower, which earlier this year became the first hospital in the desert to acquire a state-of-the-art cryoablation system called IceSense3™.

To schedule a mammogram at Eisenhower Schnitzer/Novak Breast Center, call 760-773-2038.

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