

'I want to make more people aware, women and even more, men. Women need to listen to their bodies and men need to listen to the women in their lives. When you are diagnosed with cancer, everyone's life changes for ever.'
Jenny Hall



Jenny with her husband

We want to share with you the personal experience of Jenny Hall and her family. Too many families experience the tragedy that a gynaecological cancer can bring. Jenny's family story is hopeful and we felt it needed to be told.

This is Jenny's story:

One day at the beach during the Christmas holidays in 2012, Jenny experienced spotting after her swim. It was something she hadn't experienced before, so went to see her general practitioner to check if she had an infection or something minor. Her GP referred her to a gynaecologist who recommended she have a biopsy. Being menopausal, she thought perhaps this was typical and had the biopsy three months later. That same day she was called to come back and immediately referred to a gynaecological oncologist. From that moment things changed dramatically. Jenny was told she needed to have an urgent hysterectomy including the removal of her ovaries and that the biopsy showed abnormal cells. At no time did Jenny think she had "cancer."

'I just didn't comprehend what I was being told. You have abnormal cells'

Less than a week later, things continued to move quickly for Jenny. Urgent surgery was arranged and a radical hysterectomy performed. She felt well post-surgery and was ready to go home when, just prior to her departure, the oncologist arrived and advised that her lymph nodes had come back positive. Still naïve about cancer, Jenny had no idea what this actually meant.

"As a wife and mother I wanted to shield my family from the trauma, so I stayed upbeat after the operation and didn't dream that my lymph nodes would come back positive. I coped with the diagnosis at first by denial - did I really have cancer?"

Jenny was diagnosed with Stage 3 endometrial cancer. Fortunately, she was introduced to ANZGOG member Dr Pearly Khaw, a radiation-oncologist in Melbourne. At Dr Khaw's recommendation, Jenny chose to go on



Dr Pearly Khaw

an ANZGOG clinical trial.

'When I met Dr Pearly Khaw and the clinical trial team, I knew instantly that they were my best chance of survival. Dr Khaw introduced me to everyone and showed me where treatment would occur. Everyone was so warm and approachable.'

Dr Pearly Khaw, Radiation Oncologist: "I first met Jenny in July 2012. It was 2 weeks after her surgery and she was, understandably, shell shocked with the diagnosis and trying to come to terms with the need for more treatment. Despite her fears, she was very open to the idea of participating in a clinical trial. We spent time discussing the trial and the treatment options available. I had to make sure she fully understood what a clinical trial was, how the treatment would be chosen for her and what her commitments were if she decided to participate. She also needed to be reassured that there would be no

"down side" if she didn't go on the trial. Jenny and her husband were allowed time to consider the trial and make their decision, and I was very happy when she agreed to take part. Now, 7 years later, she remains well and the trial has been published, providing much needed guidance in our management of women with high risk endometrial cancer. We remain eternally grateful to women like Jenny who are prepared to participate in trials to help other women in their journey."

Jenny's prognosis is good. Even though it was tough going through the treatment, she was determined to get better and stay alive for her family. Today, Jenny has been free from cancer for almost seven years. She believes her cancer journey has made her stronger and now sees everything as a challenge rather than a problem.

Now she is coming out the other side, Jenny says she can see that there is not enough discussion around gynaecological cancers and that more funds need to be raised for better treatments. Jenny wishes all women with a gynaecological cancer have the opportunity to go onto a clinical trial.

Following her experience, Jenny now raises awareness and funds for ANZGOG's research: 'I felt it was extremely important to give back.'

This year Jenny had a personal fundraising goal of \$1,500 to help put a woman going through the same experience onto a clinical trial. To date she has raised \$2,100, well exceeding her goal and wants to continue raising awareness and funds for ANZGOG's research to help more women go onto a clinical trial.

Endometrial cancer is found in the lining of the uterus (called the endometrium). It is the most common type of cancer of the uterus and the most common gynaecological cancer. Incidence is on

the rise with a 22% increase in diagnosis over the past 20 years. This year it is estimated 3,000 women will be diagnosed with endometrial cancer in Australia.

ANZGOG is undertaking a number of endometrial cancer clinical trials with the hope of improving life for women through research.

A donation this holiday season will help fund innovative new clinical trials to help women like Jenny. You can make this happen with a once-off gift today or a regular giving donation every month.

Yours sincerely,



**Assoc Prof Philip Beale
Chair | ANZGOG**

Together, Women's Cancer Foundation and ANZGOG are raising funds for gynaecological cancer research.

To donate please go to:

<https://www.anzgog.org.au/fund/make-a-donation/>

'It costs \$1,500 to put one woman on a clinical trial. I hope that people reading my story will give a donation to help ANZGOG find new treatments for women with endometrial or other gynaecological cancers.'



Jenny (second front left) with her family



AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND GYNAECOLOGICAL ONCOLOGY GROUP

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- Improving life for women through gynaecological cancer research*

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WOMEN'S CANCER FOUNDATION

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