

# Comfort & Care During COVID

A cancer diagnosis is always difficult, and the COVID pandemic adds additional strain.

**There is never a good time to be diagnosed with breast cancer but facing treatment during a pandemic can feel especially stressful and isolating.** For example, most patients are not permitted to have visitors at their appointments to protect everyone's safety and support social distancing. To fill that void, Kaiser Permanente physicians and staff have stepped up to demonstrate compassion for patients navigating a new diagnosis and treatment.

"I knew I wouldn't be able to have my family with me when I had surgery," shares Rosemary Donerson, who recently underwent a single mastectomy to treat breast cancer. "What I didn't expect was the warmth and caring that I would feel from the staff—they treated me like I was their family. The entire surgical experience made me feel cared for from start to finish."

Rosemary's breast cancer was discovered thanks to an annual screening mammogram. "One thing I'll say is that, where Kaiser Permanente is concerned, they will bug you to death to get that mammogram!" jokes Rosemary.



*Rosemary Donerson,  
Kaiser Permanente South Bay member*

When it comes to breast cancer, early detection saves lives, explains Dr. Rebecca Alleyne, breast surgeon at Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center.

**"Rosemary's experience illustrates the importance of staying up to date on cancer screenings.** If she'd waited another year to be checked, the findings may have been more extensive and required more treatment," says Dr. Alleyne.

To help protect patients and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, extensive safety measures have been put in place at all Kaiser Permanente facilities. Those measures include symptom screening at building entrances, frequent cleaning of surfaces and equipment, staggered appointment scheduling to support social distancing, and requiring all who enter Kaiser Permanente buildings to wear a mask.

Now recovering at home, Rosemary is grateful to every member of the care team that helped her surgery go smoothly. "I went home the same day as my surgery, and I have not had any pain. My surgical experience could not have gone better."

For her part, Dr. Alleyne credits the team approach that creates a high-quality, safe experience. "So much coordination goes on between anesthesia, pre-op, and the recovery room. We're all in communication with each other to get patients the best care."

**If you are due for a mammogram or other cancer screening, contact Kaiser Permanente South Bay at 1-800-780-1230.**