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HEALTH

# Surviving cancer with a baby on the way

By MARY ANNE CHRISTIANO  
of The Montclair Times

It's Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Montclair resident Patrice Noyes has a double dose of good news. Not only is she a cancer survivor, she will be having a baby boy any day now. It's her second child and also her second experience with breast cancer.

"My first experience was my 30th birthday present," Noyes said. "I was single and living at home when I found a lump."

Noyes had been in remission for almost nine years and had a healthy pregnancy during that time. When she got pregnant the second time, she discovered the cancer returned.

"I had to have a mastectomy at Mountainside Hospital and go through chemotherapy once again," Noyes said. "I had a wonderful cancer doctor, an oncologist out of St. Barnabas in Livingston who was able to research enough good information to be able to give me a chemo regimen that would be safe for the baby."

When the cancer returned, Noyes didn't lose her good spirits. "My reaction has been very well, I think, because I was a little older this time," she said. "I had the responsibility of a wife and mother. It makes you put a lot of things into a healthier perspective. I had two



Staff photo by Adam Anik

**LIFE GOES ON:** Patrice Noyes, with two-year-old daughter Angela, rejoices in being a mother and breast cancer survivor.

other very important people to think about, waking up to see a healthy and happy husband and daughter."

Dr. Nancy Elliott, founder and director of the Montclair Breast Center, was the surgeon who recently discovered the tumor in Noyes' breast. She said that when women have babies later in life, that puts them at a risk for breast cancer. Elliott said, "You don't meet anyone now who is having

kids in their 20s."

According to Elliott, women who have not had a child by the age of 35, should start getting mammograms. Another risk factor is obesity. Elliott's message is that it's not only important to go every year for a mammogram, but to pay a little more attention to where to go for a mammogram. She said, "Just like we pay attention to who our hairdresser is."

Noyes said she came through

chemotherapy with "flying colors."

"There aren't many pregnant cancer patients walking around. I want to let people know you can do it, it's not the end of the world," she said. "You get lots of stares when you're a bald pregnant person. It's okay. It's one more person to share a good story with."

Of course there were also trying times for Noyes, dealing with both morning sickness and chemotherapy. She said, "You sit there having chemo, but have this nice round belly in front of you. One makes you forget the other. I always had my little angel with me."

Noyes continued, "God doesn't give you anything more than you can handle. But I wish he didn't find me so damn responsible. I know I can handle it, but I don't mind proving it. You just have to have a good attitude. Cancer sucks and you can't say that it doesn't."

*Dr. Nancy Elliott will give the opening remarks at Hope on the Horizon: Living Beyond Breast Cancer's Stacy Goldstein Symposium. The conference will take place at the Doubletree Hotel & Executive Meeting Center in Somerset, on Saturday, Oct. 30. Registration starts at 8 a.m. This conference is co-sponsored by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. For more information, go to [www.lbbc.org](http://www.lbbc.org).*