Breathing easier
Patient benefits from innovative lung cancer surgery

Michael Bartmann was hoping for another uneventful CT scan. What his doctor found was anything but routine. A mass had developed in his right lung. A biopsy confirmed it was early-stage lung cancer.

“It definitely stopped us in our tracks,” said Bartmann, who had previously battled with head and neck cancer.

Region’s only dedicated thoracic specialist
His doctor referred him to Nirmal Veeramachaneni, MD, general thoracic surgeon with the MidAmerica Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons at The University of Kansas Hospital. Dr. Veeramachaneni is the only specialist in the region solely dedicated to complex issues of the chest and esophagus, including lung cancer.

Since joining the hospital last July, Dr. Veeramachaneni has helped enhance and expand the quality of care and clinical research at The University of Kansas Cancer Center, an NCI-designated cancer center.

“At my first appointment,” Bartmann said, “Dr. Veeramachaneni walked in, offered his hand, and said, ‘Hi, I’m Nirmal.’ That diffused a lot of tension. After we talked, there was no question in my mind that he could put the right skills and right people in place for me.”

During that initial appointment, they discussed Bartmann’s treatment options and the multidisciplinary team that would join Dr. Veeramachaneni to guide Bartmann's care. The team included a medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, pulmonologist and radiologist.

Personalized care, coordinated treatment
“The team and our multidisciplinary approach is what sets us apart,” said Dr. Veeramachaneni. “The point is to make patient care patient-centric, meaning we not only review patients’ cases together, we also evaluate patients together.”

With a designated coordinator on staff, patients like Bartmann can make an appointment with their thoracic surgeon, medical oncologist or radiation oncologist at the same time.

Advanced technique, faster recovery
But it is not simply about convenience. It is also about the ability and capacity to use advanced techniques to treat complex cases.

“Dr. Veeramachaneni’s focus is a unique specialty, raising the bar for multidisciplinary care,” said Terry Tsue, MD, head and neck surgeon and physician-in-chief at The University of Kansas Cancer Center. “Because of his dedication to thoracic surgery, he can bring the latest minimally invasive and diagnostic techniques into play.”

Dr. Veeramachaneni performed an endobronchial ultrasound biopsy to confirm Bartmann’s lung cancer had not spread beyond the reach of surgery. Then the surgeon and the multidisciplinary team agreed that a video-assisted lobectomy would be used to remove the mass from Bartmann’s lung.

In this minimally invasive technique, the surgeon makes three 1-inch incisions to access the chest without spreading the ribs. A small video camera, called a thoroscope, guides the surgical instruments to help the surgeon remove the malignancy. Performed in fewer than 50 percent of lobectomies in the United States, the procedure significantly reduces the patient’s hospital stay and recovery time compared with traditional, open-chest surgery.

Hours after surgery, and a month after his first consultation, Bartmann was free of lung cancer.

“I have been to numerous hospitals in various areas of the country,” added Bartmann. “This experience, this hospital stay, was the best.”

For more information about our lung cancer program, visit kucancercenter.org.

Why would you go anywhere else?

Lung screening saves lives
Studies have shown low-dose CT screening for those at high risk can lead to early detection and save 20 percent more lives.

For those at risk for lung cancer, early detection is key. Our lung cancer screening includes a lower-radiation-exposure CT scan that can safely be used as a reliable screening tool for lung cancer.

Those who meet the following criteria may qualify for screening:
• At least 50 years old
• Current or past smoker
• Habit of at least a pack of cigarettes a day
• Habit lasting at least 20 years

The screening may be covered by insurance. If not, the cost is $240, which includes same-day results with a consultation.

To confirm eligibility and schedule an appointment, call 913-588-1227.

For more information about the screening, visit kumed.com/lungscreening.
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Because of the most advanced care, provided by a multidisciplinary team of specialists, Michael Bartmann is now free of lung cancer.