

Test Sheds New Light On Breast Cancer Risk

(NAPSA)—One of Pat Doty's biggest fears is to join the estimated 190,000 women in the United States annually who will learn they have breast cancer. Already at high risk for the disease, because of family history, Pat's anxiety had been compounded by the discovery of two benign cysts. Recognizing Pat's concerns, her doctor suggested that she undergo ductal lavage, an innovative method of collecting fluid from inside the breast milk ducts. The fluid is then analyzed to search for abnormal cells.

Doctors have known for years that the presence of atypical (abnormal) cells in the breast milk ducts increase a woman's breast cancer risk. In fact, studies have shown that for women who have atypical cells, their breast cancer risk increases 4-5 times, and even higher for women who also have a family history of breast cancer.

"Most women are terrified of being told they have breast cancer. Women at higher risk naturally want to know as much as they can about their chances of developing the disease," said Dr. Katherine Lee, an associate professor and breast specialist at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio. "Ductal lavage provides women with unique and personal information about their breast health, which can help them make important decisions about pursuing closer follow-up and risk reduction options."

Performed in the doctor's office, ductal lavage involves slipping a tiny, flexible tube called a "catheter" into the milk duct, and washing ("lavaging") it with saline to collect the cells. The cells are then analyzed under a microscope to determine whether they are normal or atypical. Doctors nationwide are using this method



to provide women like Pat and their doctors with more information about their risk for breast cancer.

The results of Pat's procedure indicated that she had atypical cells. After consulting with her doctor, Pat decided to discontinue hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and began taking a drug called tamoxifen to help reduce her risk for developing breast cancer. Pat says she felt a pinching sensation during ductal lavage, which, like other women, she characterizes as momentary, minor discomfort. She's a firm believer that the information she gained was invaluable. "Ductal lavage gave me very useful information about my risk level, and helped me make decisions about what I should do to reduce my risk," said Pat who plans a recheck in six months.

High-risk women of any age may be good candidates for ductal lavage, which must be used in conjunction with standard surveillance techniques such as mammography, clinical exams and breast self-exams. Additional information can be found at **www.ductallavage.com** or by calling toll-free 1-866-4-INDUCT.