

Shelley Conrath has some advice for women — “Do your monthly breast self-examination, act on it immediately if anything seems suspicious, and go to healthcare professionals who have the best credentials and experience.” In March 2006, Shelley found herself acting on her own advice.

“I noticed a small lump in my left breast during my monthly self-exam,” Shelley said. She already had an appointment with Catherine Coats, DO, at **Athens Obstetrics and Gynecology**. “I can’t say enough good things about Dr. Coats,” Shelley said. “She was wonderful.” Dr. Coats immediately scheduled Shelley for a mammogram at **O’Bleness Memorial Hospital’s radiology satellite** in the Castrop Center. The mammogram was followed up three days later with an ultrasound at O’Bleness.

When both tests showed reason for concern, Shelley made an appointment to see an oncology surgeon at the James Cancer Hospital and Solove

Research Institute at Ohio State University in Columbus. A needle biopsy procedure showed the mass was malignant.

“I quickly went from denial to immediately wanting to get the best cancer treatment available,” Shelley said. After exploring her diagnosis and treatment options at the James, she opted for an immediate lumpectomy to remove the margins around the tumor and also had a lymph node biopsy to determine if the cancer had spread. In addition, a new genetics-based test helped determine that chemotherapy was not needed; however, radiation therapy was recommended.

“My doctor at the James recommended the **Athens Cancer Center** at the Castrop Center for my radiation therapy,” Shelley said. “I was able to drive myself to my 33 radiation treatments.

“The staff at the Athens Cancer Center is just wonderful,” Shelley said. “Dr. Anjali Ambekar, the radiation oncologist, and the radiation therapists are very knowledgeable and extremely helpful. It was really nice to know I didn’t face a long drive every day. I was able to keep exercising and had time for a relaxing summer with family and friends.”



*Shelley Conrath with her grandchildren*