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HEALTH & MEDICINE

Food line caters to those with cancer

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January 20, 2009, 2:14 p.m.

Gannett News Service

As she was fighting breast cancer several years ago, there were some days Helene Gruber just wasn't hungry.

Other days, the Glendale, Ohio, woman didn't have the energy to put together a meal and eat it.

But Gruber, a registered dietitian and the director of nutrition services at St.

Elizabeth Medical Center in Kentucky, knew she had to eat. About a third of all cancer deaths are actually caused by malnutrition, not the cancer itself.

"You just feel so puny and punky and poisoned, and you really don't feel like eating or drinking anything," she said.

To give cancer patients and others battling critical illness an edge in recovery, Gruber teamed up with KHI Foods in Burlington, Ky., to develop a line of prepared fortified soups, oatmeals, vitamin waters,

cookies and breads.

Gruber worked with clinical dietitians at the hospital to make sure the foods hit all the right notes nutritionally. The Comfort Care products are aimed at tempting patients' appetites while giving them extra protein, fiber, vitamins and crucial nutrients.

The soups are all built around what she calls "a magic formula" of micronutrients and minerals shown to help cancer patients recover.

Millard Long of KHI worked with Giminetti Baking in Walnut Hills, Ohio, to develop a whole wheat bread fortified with protein and fiber.

"There's so much research emerging on micronutrients and polyphenols and all the good nutrients in brightly colored fruits and vegetables," Gruber said.

The Comfort Care products just need to be heated and eaten, making it easier to put together a comforting meal for patients and caregivers.

Customers can order packaged kits that include two to three days worth of products, plus utensils, for \$119. They can also order just the soups or a combination of the soups and breads for \$59.

Comfort Care foods use sustainable agricultural products, and packaging materials are all

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Product site: www.comfort-care-products.com.

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environmentally friendly, Long said.

The products can be bought at the St. Elizabeth Medical Center hospitals in Edgewood and Covington, or online at www.comfort-care-products.com.

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