



Riordan  
Clinic

# Health Hunters

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Riordan Clinic is a world-renowned, academic medical center that has led the world in integrative oncology and complex chronic illness care since 1975. The Riordan Clinic was established as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization with missions in research, provider education, and patient education. The Health Hunter newsletter has been published since 1986 as an educational resource to providers and patients.

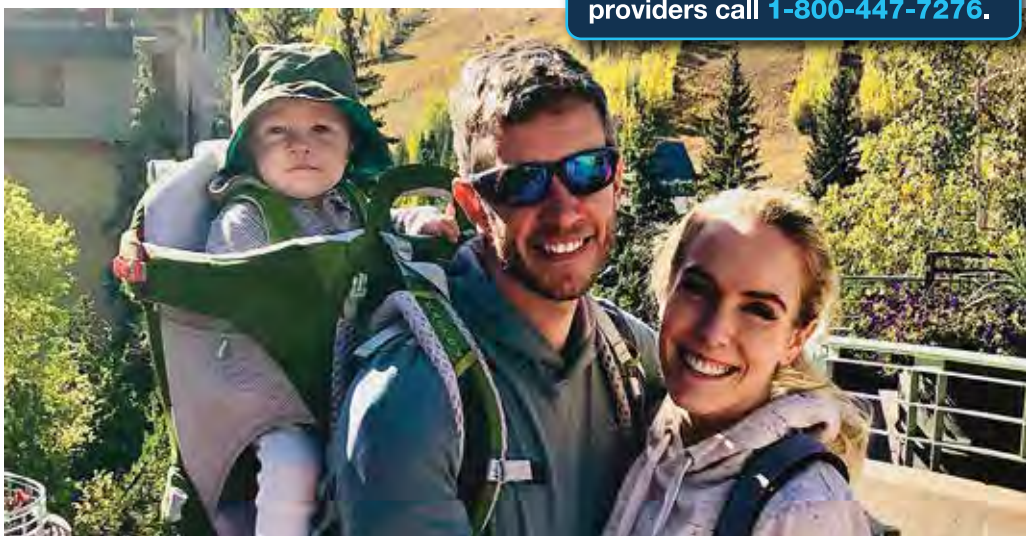
## DR. KIRSTEN WEST JOINS RIORDAN CLINIC'S INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY TEAM



AUTHOR

Melody Spurney

To make an appointment with Dr. Kirsten West or the Riordan Clinic's other integrative oncology providers call **1-800-447-7276**.



A difficult experience watching family members struggle with cancer inspired what would become a professional passion for Dr. Kirsten West.

The naturopathic physician specializes in integrative oncology and is the newest addition to the Riordan Clinic's cancer care team. Dr. West brings with her a set of credentials that make her one of the most unique cancer care providers in the country. She will begin practicing with the Riordan Clinic on July 11.

Dr. West's experience with cancer began with her grandparents, all but one of whom died from the disease. When in college at the University of Colorado she helped her mother care for her grandmother from New Hampshire who stayed with the family in Colorado while undergoing traditional treatment for small cell lung cancer.

"I did my very best to take care of her with my mom when she was going through all of her chemo and radiation. Despite all we were told to do, she lost her battle quickly," she said.

Dr. West knew she wanted to go into medicine after college, but it was her experience shadowing psychiatrists, additional medical professionals and working as a hospital trained phlebotomist – as well as influence from her mother -- that guided her toward naturopathic medicine rather than a traditional medical school path.

*Continued on pages 2 & 3*

"I realized that I was spending more time with the patient during a routine blood draw than many doctors had time to spend in traditional follow-ups. I knew then I wanted to make a larger difference in the lives of those who seek/need care," she said.

After earning her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Colorado in Boulder, Dr. West considered traditional medical school but changed her mind after shadowing a naturopathic doctor in Denver who specialized in integrative oncology. She realized that his approach to patient care could have improved her grandmother's experience with her treatment, quality, and length of life.

"I went to meet him and shadow. I realized all I could have done to help her and yet I had no idea these approaches to care were available and could have made such a difference in not only her life but in the lives of those afflicted by cancer," she said.

Dr. West said that in an integrative oncology approach to cancer treatment, practitioners take a "whole-person" approach to treatment encompassing aspects such as metabolic, immune, inflammatory, endocrine, environmental, stress, and psychosocial factors.

Dr. West earned a degree as a Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine from Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine in Tempe, Arizona. Halfway through medical school she decided to focus on integrative oncology and was a resident at Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Philadelphia.

"It's a coveted residency. It was difficult to get," she said.

Although she was asked to stay in Philadelphia when she completed her residency, Dr. West decided to return to Colorado where she worked in a clinic alongside a medical oncologist.

"It was one of the best experiences that I've ever had," she said. "Talk about true integrative oncology."

In addition to her residency and naturopathic degree, Dr. West also has a master's in Oriental Medicine and Acupuncture, a Fellowship on the American Board of Naturopathic Oncology (FABNO), and has earned a Metabolic Approach to Cancer certificate from the Metabolic Terrain Institute of Health (MATC certified). One of only 120 naturopaths in the United States who have FABNO, the addition of the metabolic terrain certificate and her license in acupuncture enable her to give her patients a truly one-of-a-kind experience.

### **Terrain-Based Care**

Dr. West describes the concept of terrain simply. "It's the body -- the soil, the terrain," she said.

She said that traditional oncology focuses on targeting cancer cells, which she said is important. However, she said terrain treatment addresses what is going on around the cells and the person as a whole. She compares it to growing plants and adapting soil for desired outcomes.

"If you don't change the soil around which a plant is growing, you're not going to make a change," she said. "If a weed starts to grow, we've got to change the soil that made it hospitable for growth."

Dr. West said that terrain-based approach works not only with all types of cancer but with a host of other conditions as well. Integrative oncology and terrain-based cancer care includes a



variety of approaches including relationship building between the provider and patient, extensive lab work personalized to the patient, diet, exercise, supplements, and other clinic-based treatments such as mistletoe and high-dose vitamin C.

She said that learning a traditional approach to cancer at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America, having the fortune to learn alongside medical and naturopathic oncologists (some of the best in their field), and later working with terrain treatment leader Dr. Nasha Winters in Durango, Colorado, helped give her a well-rounded perspective on cancer care.

"I feel so blessed with the experiences that I've had because I've been able to put this big picture together and really treat a patient as a whole," she said.

Dr. West said the relationships she builds with her patients are key to their treatment plans. She said creating mutual trust and a friendship are necessary to the integrative approach. She wants her patients to know that she is a co-learner as well.

"I'm here to support them," she said. "They should be at the center of their care. And we should all be supporting their decisions and how they're doing. I think we lose that in the traditional model."

As for her patients, she wants to know their treatment goals – whether it is remission or to simply feel better during therapy or something else.

"Their vision and their goals ultimately set up our treatment plan and it structures what we are able to do," she said. "I will always practice with the intent to make them well."

Dr. West said that one of her memorable success stories is that of a young mother who had stage 4 colon cancer and was given a year or two to live by a medical oncologist. She said her treatment plan included supplements and a variety of treatments, including a hyperthermia treatment in Canada. The lesions shrank enough to make her a candidate for surgery. Today, she is cancer free.

Dr. West said one of the rewarding things about integrative oncology is knowing how to build a road map for patients and the variety of care. She said traditional treatments can be so fragmented that patients can get lost in the process.

She maintains long-term relationships with her patients as labs are monitored on a regular basis and said regular check-ins are valuable.

“I feel like my consults, especially with those who are in remission, it’s almost like a therapy consult,” she said. “I feel like I’m their champion.”

**At the Riordan Clinic**

Dr. West will be seeing patients virtually from her home in suburban Denver. When patients need lab work or in-person care, she will collaborate with the Riordan Clinic’s other three integrative oncology providers, Dr. Ron Hunninghake in Wichita and Dr. Lucas Tims and Laura Vasquez in Overland Park. With the addition of Dr. West, all four of the Riordan Clinic’s cancer providers are certified in the Metabolic Approach to Cancer by the Metabolic Terrain Institute of Health.

She said that the virtual patient experience will be the same as any other doctor consult, she just won’t be able to perform a physical exam.

“It’s incredible how closely you can form relationships virtually,” she said.

Dr. West said that her initial knowledge of the Riordan Clinic came from one of her mother’s best friends who lived in Kansas and

received treatment at the clinic. She said that she had long been interested in the clinic, and maintaining her home in Colorado while practicing with the clinic was too good to pass up.

“The thing that I love the most about the Riordan Clinic is that it is such a collaboration. It is such a team,” she said. “They really want to make inroads into integrative oncology, and I think that we need that passion to really drive this thing forward. When there’s enough like-minded people who are on the same path and have the same vision, that’s when you really make a change.”

**Family and Outdoor Fun**

Dr. West and her husband, Adam Markert, have a 2-year-old son, Luca, and are expecting a daughter in September. The family lives in Castle Rock, Colorado, and loves being outside and enjoying the mountains. When not working with patients, Dr. West also enjoys reading, yoga and physical activity, and time with friends.

She said a fun fact about her activities is that they are never group sports.

“I am the most uncoordinated person you will ever meet,” she said.

“Every activity that I do is a singular person sport so nobody has to rely on me to make a goal or catch a ball. In turn, I am the best advocate of those who will catch that ball and make that goal.”



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# TERRAIN-BASED CANCER CARE FOCUSES ON WHOLE PERSON



AUTHOR

Melody Spurney



The Riordan Clinic has a rich heritage of groundbreaking innovation in cancer care. Clinic co-founders Dr. Hugh Riordan and Olive W. Garvey founded the clinic on the premise that all complex chronic illness, including cancer, has origins in nutrient deficiencies. Today, the clinic's integrative oncology team builds on that foundation with a terrain approach to care. This approach targets the root cause of the cancer while simultaneously working to improve quality of life, manage side effects, reduce risk of recurrence, and improve immunity.

The integrative oncologists at Riordan Clinic describe cancer as a weed problem, which is why terrain-based testing and a metabolic approach to treating it are used by the clinic's oncology team.

In a Real Health Podcast entitled "What is the Terrain Based Approach to Cancer?" that originally aired in April 2022, Dr. Lucas Tims, ND, FABNO, of the Riordan Clinic's Overland Park clinic, described the terrain-based approach as a garden. Conventional cancer care focuses on killing cancer cells – much like weeds in a garden. The metabolic, terrain-based approach considers the body as soil and uses integrative medicine to look for root causes of cancer, rather than simply attacking the cancer itself.

"The traditional approach from Western medicine is to put chemicals on the weeds ... to cut them out, burn them, and then wait and see if they come back. Whereas the metabolic or terrain-based approach looks at all the things you can't see on the surface level but that we know are actually what's driving the weed problem in the first place," he said.<sup>1</sup>

Podcast co-host Dr. Ron Hunninghake, MD, and Chief Medical Officer based at the Wichita clinic, said recurrence rates can be high if patients rely only on conventional care.

"This is in line with Dr. Riordan's approach to dealing with complex chronic illnesses of all types. We look for the root causes. The root causes are the things that often are overlooked in developing treatment plans for cancer patients."

Integrative oncology and metabolic cancer treatments take a

whole-body approach. Treatment plans include extensive lab work personalized to the patient, diet, exercise, supplements, and other naturopathic treatments. In fact, a 2018 study from the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health found only 12 percent of American adults are metabolically healthy.<sup>2</sup> In addition to cancer, chronic metabolic diseases also include Type 2 Diabetes, Alzheimer's, heart disease, obesity, hypertension, Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, among others.<sup>3</sup>

The Metabolic Terrain Institute of Health (MTIH) is a leader in metabolic terrain-based cancer care. Under the leadership of Executive Director Dr. Nasha Winters, ND, FABNO, the institute uses the approach to focus on an individual patient's "why," including what caused cancer to grow, specific therapies, improving quality of life, and reducing mortality rates.<sup>4</sup>

MTIH also offers certifications for providers who complete an extensive Metabolic Approach to Cancer program (MATC), which includes more than 4 months of training designed to ingrain a methodology and improve clinical outcomes. All four providers on the Riordan Clinic's integrative oncology team have earned the MATC certificate. In addition to Dr. Lucas and Dr. Ron, the team also includes Dr. Kirsten West, ND, LAc, FABNO, working virtually and with the Wichita clinic, and Laura Vasquez, MSN, APRN, NP-C, working at the Overland Park clinic.

Vasquez said there are numerous benefits to both care providers and patients working with a terrain-based approach to cancer care. She said that providers learn to recognize patterns in patients that help target effective interventions to strengthen them and heal the whole person rather than simply target the tumor or cancer microenvironment.

"Close monitoring of specific bio-markers helps us shift treatment plans and make evidence-based decisions," said Vasquez. "Incorporating in-depth testing and providing adjunctive therapies that can often be combined with conventional treatments gives our patients the best outcomes to not only slow the progression of cancer cells but remove barriers to their own healing while strengthening the soil or body."

Based on the philosophy of “Test, Assess, Address, Never Guess,” as defined by the Metabolic Terrain Institute of Health the terrain-based treatment approach has a core of 10 focuses.<sup>3</sup>

- Genetic, epigenetic, and nutrigenomic modifications
- Blood sugar balance
- Toxic burden management
- Repopulating and balancing the microbiome
- Immune system maximization
- Modulating inflammation and oxidative stress
- Enhancing blood circulation while inhibiting angiogenesis and metastasis
- Establishing hormone balance
- Recalibrating stress levels and biorhythms
- Enhancing mental and emotional well-being

In the April podcast, Dr. Lucas and Dr. Ron further explained the concepts behind the 10 terrains. The discussion focused on toxicity, which is common in patients; angiogenesis, which drives blood flow to a tumor; and inflammation, which is a sign the body is trying to heal itself but is also feeding the cancer. They also discussed harmful bacteria, which weakens the immune system; how stress and trauma can negatively affect circadian rhythms; and the importance of building a patient’s foundation back to encourage healing.<sup>1</sup>

The Riordan Clinic’s integrative oncology team has seen patients’ quality of life improve as a result of the terrain-based approach to cancer care. Not only do many of them experience a reduction in side effects that can accompany conventional cancer care such as chemotherapy and radiation, some emerge healthier than they were before diagnosis.



“When the terrain approach is truly fostered, it can cultivate greater health and well-being than what was experienced or possible prior to the diagnosis of the disease,” said Dr. West. “By understanding what physiological pathological patterns may be at play, these can be reversed and physiological harmony can be found. It enables clinical outcomes that surpass survival statistics and prognosis.”

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3. <https://mtih.org/metabolic-approach-to-cancer/>
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Approach to Cancer  
with Dr. Ron and Dr. Lucas!

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# STEVE SPENCER FINDS HELP AND HOPE AFTER TREATMENTS



AUTHOR

Melody Spurney



Steve Spencer rolled his wheelchair into the Riordan Clinic in Overland Park in 2020 looking for help ... and hope. He found both. In the spring of 2022, he finished a 5K and celebrated a family vacation in Hawaii and his younger daughter's engagement.

Steve, 62, of Liberty, Missouri, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in January 2019 and initially followed a traditional treatment path. A week after his diagnosis, he secured an appointment at the University of Kansas Medical Center to receive a whipple procedure, which removes part of the pancreas. Steve said the surgical team was unaware at the time that he was dehydrated, and the surgery was stopped an hour and a half after it started because his blood pressure was dropping. For more than two days, Steve said his condition was so uncertain that his family was encouraged not to leave the hospital.

"I got to be a guest at KU for about 14 days," he said.

He did leave the hospital and had chemotherapy treatments for about four months. He and his wife, Miriam, decided to look for a more experienced surgeon to perform his follow-up surgery. They chose Duke University in North Carolina and Steve had a successful procedure that cleared evidence of cancer from his pancreas, although he discovered it had spread to his lymph nodes. He also emerged from the second surgery with kidney problems that required dialysis and contracted MRSA as well.

Steve tried chemotherapy a second time, but he wasn't able to tolerate the treatment. By this time, the MRSA had settled in his spine, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down.

"At that point, my traditional oncologist sent me home and said, 'enjoy your last days,'" he said.

Steve and Miriam had begun investigating alternative options for cancer treatment when one of their daughters brought them information about the Riordan Clinic she received from her chiropractor.

By the time Steve arrived at the Riordan Clinic in Overland Park in January 2020, Dr. Lucas Tims said he had stage 4 pancreatic cancer and was so ill that he wasn't sure there was much he could do to help him. Miriam, however, insisted Dr. Lucas try.

"He was in pretty rough condition," Dr. Lucas said.

But Miriam was persistent.

"My wife has led this charge," Steve said. "She has been a great champion for me. In fact, my primary care doctor said she earned her MD degree with me over the last 2 to 3 years."

Dr. Lucas said he and Steve worked together on a treatment plan that included IV therapies, injections, mistletoe treatments, IV Vitamin C, and ozone, but the MRSA infection initially persisted, and Steve remained in the wheelchair. Dr. Lucas said it took almost four months before Steve showed any strong signs of improvement.

Steve and Dr. Lucas said the ozone treatments and an antibiotic helped heal the MRSA. Dr. Lucas said he watched as Steve graduated from his wheelchair, to a walker, then a cane, and in the spring of 2022 walked a 5K.

"We parked the wheelchair in the garage, got rid of the handicap van, and I've been working out and exercising every day since," Steve said.

In addition to his treatments, Steve said his family adapted to lifestyle changes as a result of their experience at Riordan Clinic. They focus on eating better, drinking clean water, taking supplements, and have even put filters on their shower heads – something he said he shares with others at the clinic.

Steve said that after more than two years at Riordan Clinic the staff feels like family.

"It's been a great experience," he said. "They've always got smiles on their faces."



One staff member in particular has made an impression on him. Emmy Gomez, Overland Park office manager, began working at the clinic after Steve began his treatment there. But from the beginning, he appreciated her positive attitude.

“She’s a happy person and just lives that. I thought, some people here could be wallowing in their own pity and upset and think, ‘How dare she be so happy when we’re sitting here with a cancer diagnosis,’ but it really does lift the emotions of the people that are here,” he said.

Today, Steve shows no signs of cancer, though he told Dr. Lucas not to tell him he is cancer free.

“I will never say that I’m in remission,” he said, recalling that his own mother died of colon cancer less than two months after she had been given an “all clear.”

He currently travels the 50 miles from his home to the clinic once a week for ozone and vitamin C treatments.

Steve said he often tells others who have been diagnosed with cancer or know someone who has about the Riordan Clinic.

“I kind of feel like God has left me here to provide hope for others and their families that get diagnosed with cancer. You can just kind of tell the first timers are a little apprehensive and scared and don’t know what to do and I try to ease that a little bit,” he said.

Steve and Miriam have two sons and two daughters and six grandchildren with two more expected to join the family in 2022. He will celebrate his 63rd birthday at the end of July.

## Contact the Editor

Please send any comments or suggestions to  
[marketing@riordanclinic.org](mailto:marketing@riordanclinic.org)  
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**Melody Spurney**  
 Editor

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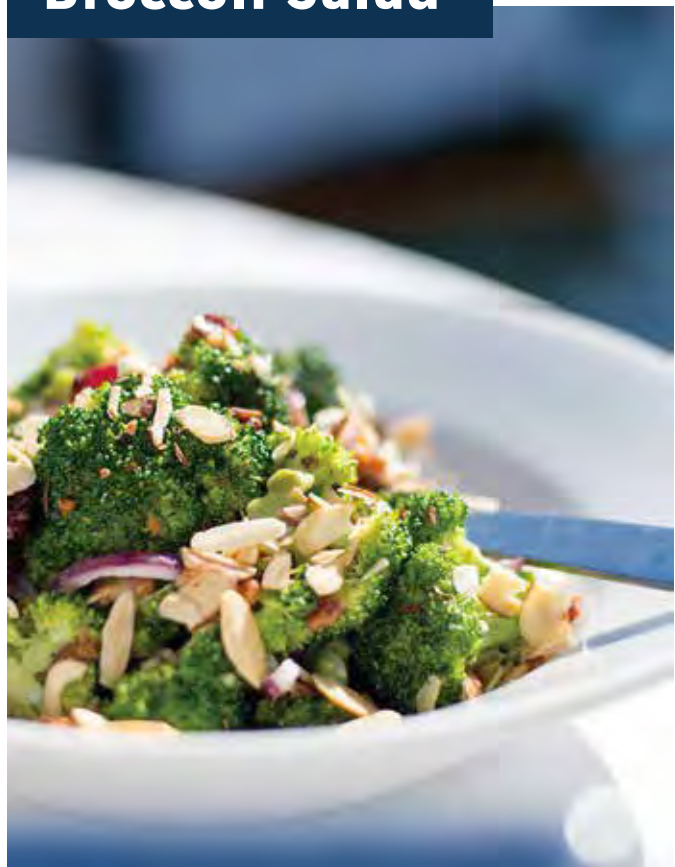


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# Broccoli Salad



## INGREDIENTS

1 ½ to 2 pounds broccoli on the stalk, enough for 8 cups florets  
1 cup sliced red onion  
1 carrot, julienned or grated  
½ cup raisins  
½ cup mayonnaise (vegan mayo as needed)  
3 Tbsp apple cider vinegar  
1 Tbsp sugar or maple syrup  
2 tsp Dijon mustard  
1 tsp kosher salt

### For the topping

¼ cup sunflower seeds  
1 Tbsp soy sauce or tamari  
1 Tbsp maple syrup or sugar  
1 tsp smoked paprika

## COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Chop the broccoli into very small florets. Slice the onion. Stir together with the raisins.
2. Whisk together the mayo, apple cider vinegar, sugar, Dijon mustard, and salt. Add to the vegetables and mix to combine. Refrigerate for 1 hour to allow the flavors to meld and the broccoli to become soft. (You can eat right away but the broccoli is crisp and has less of the traditional texture.)
3. Meanwhile, place the sunflower seeds, soy sauce, sugar, smoked paprika, and 2 pinches kosher salt in a skillet. Heat over medium low and sauté for about 5 to 6 minutes, stirring frequently, until they are sticky and most of the liquid has evaporated, taking care that they do not burn. Scrape any sticky bits from the bottom of the pan. When they are sticky and darkened in color (and may have clumped together), remove from the heat and spread onto parchment paper in a single layer and allow to dry until serving, about 10 minutes.
4. When ready to serve, top the salad with the sunflower seeds.

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### LATEST EPISODES



#### EPISODE 35

##### IV NUTRITIONAL THERAPY

Dr. Virginia Osborne, ND

Dr. Ron Hunninghake, MD, Chief Medical Officer, welcomes Dr. Virginia Osborne, ND. Dr. Osborne specializes in IV nutrient therapies. In this episode, she explains how IV nutrition can help enhance people's health and helps heal from the inside out. She also discusses her new book "A Scientific Reference for Intravenous Nutrient Therapies: Direct Cellular Nutrition."



#### EPISODE 34

##### ARTHRITIS AND REGENERATIVE INJECTION THERAPIES

Dr. Dustin Moffitt, ND

Dr. Ron Hunninghake, MD, Chief Medical Officer welcomes colleague Dr. Dustin Moffitt, ND, who discusses how regenerative therapies assist him when working with patients with arthritis and other chronic inflammatory conditions. Dr. Moffitt uses treatments like Prolotherapy, Prolozone, and Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) to help stimulate the wound to reboot the healing process.

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