PHILADELPHIA (CBS 3) — One in eight women develop breast cancer in the United States, but it's a disease local researchers are trying to prevent. A new vaccine is showing promise. Right now it's not preventing, instead it's being used like a treatment.

Inside a syringe at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania is a therapy that's helping get rid of breast cancer.

Karen Berner, from Yardley, is living proof.

"I just am in awe today of it," said Karen. She was diagnosed with DCIS HER2/neu, a non-invasive form of breast cancer. She came to Dr. B Czerniecki at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania for treatment.

That's when she heard about his breast cancer vaccine trial.

"Initial results we have from the trial are extremely encouraging," said Dr. Czerniecki.

"The minute he said to me we will use your white blood cells to make a vaccine for you, I didn't have to give it a second thought," said Karen.

Researchers in a lab take the patient's blood cells and add molecules; training the patient's own cells to act like a virus.

It's then injected back in the patient every week, for six weeks to create an immune response to kill the cancer.

"The trial is aimed at seeing if the immune responses can be turned on, and if they can stay on, how long they can stay on, and if it can make DCIS go away," said Dr. Czerniecki.

Karen says the vaccine made all the difference in her prognosis.

"The vaccine made me cancer free. And history is being made right here in our back yard," said Karen.

Currently this vaccine does not replace current treatment, so women still may undergo radiation and surgery. The doctors hope to eventually prevent the disease from ever happening.

For more information on the trial, call the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania at 1-877-789-PENN.

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