



Cancer Q & A

with Kathy Kanavos

YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT CANCER

Dear Kathy,

My breast cancer treatment seems so long that I cannot focus on its completion. This is making me very depressed. What should I do?

Linda in Pennsylvania

Dear Linda,

I remember how depressed I was when I realized my second breast cancer treatment would consist of surgery followed by six months of chemotherapy, followed by more surgery, followed by a month and a half of radiation followed by.... It seemed never ending!

I was looking too far ahead. So I started to focus on setting reasonable goals and celebrating the passing of every milestone, no matter how big or small because...there are no small accomplishments when it comes to cancer treatment.

During therapy, set reasonable goals, such as completing the third mark of your chemotherapy schedule. Then celebrate meeting that goal in a way that is special to you. It can be with others or simply with a quiet moment or evening alone. For me, these celebrations were an important part of maintaining the quality of my life. Good luck with your treatments.

Please email your questions to
kathykanavos@yahoo.com

Dear Kathy,

How important is attitude when it comes to cancer treatment? The damage is already done. My attitude cannot change the past.

Donna from Florida

Dear Donna,

Once you are diagnosed with cancer, your life has been changed forever. Your attitude cannot change the past, but it can affect your future. I found that when I was happy, I healed faster and felt better. Attitude is perception. You can see the glass as half empty or half full. How you choose to perceive something is a choice.

Unfortunately, old habits are hard to break, but not impossible. Being aware of the negatives that surround cancer treatment but choosing to focus on the silver lining takes time and practice.

Dear Kathy,

I took Taxol this past year as one of my chemotherapies for breast cancer. Half-way through my treatment I developed numbness in my fingers and toes. I know that this is a side effect of some chemotherapies. Will I always have this numbness?

Cindy, Boston

Dear Cindy,

Unfortunately some cancer treatments do have lingering, late and long-term side effects. Some, like nausea, are well known. Others, like neuropathy (nerve damage that results in loss of sensation in the feet and hands), can be extremely painful and impede mobility.

My lingering side effect from cancer therapy was ringing in my ears. Eventually this went away without the help of other medications and now is just a memory. I did not take Taxol but I know friends who did. They said their neuropathy eventually diminished. Time and a positive mental attitude have a way of healing the body. Staying focused on the fact that I was a survivor was a great help in my healing process. Good luck with your healing process.

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos is a cancer survivor and an agented author of SURVIVING CANCERLAND: The Psychic Aspects of Healing. She is currently working on her second book, SURVIVING RECURRENCE in CANCERLAND: The Dream World and Healing. Visit her web site: www.survivingcancerland.com and her blog: <http://kathleenokeefekanavos.blogspot.com>

In addition to answering readers' cancer questions for www.capewomenonline.com, Kathleen is a phone counselor for the R.A. BLOCH Cancer Foundation and a breast cancer mentor for WE CAN. Her articles about her experiences appear on many blogs and discussion groups. She also volunteers for many cancer organizations and online cancer support groups. Follow her on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/PsychCancerland> and Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/#/profile.php?id=1345885644>