

What's all this hype about Breast Cancer??

This month's article is a repeat of one I did several years ago. I feel it is one of the most important articles I have ever written, and is worth repeating. Up front I will tell you the title is in no way meant to demean all of the support and effort being made in the fight against breast cancer.

What's all this hype about breast cancer? We constantly see "Breast Cancer Walks," "Pennies for Vicki," and numerous other rallies to promote breast cancer awareness. Why is there all this hype? Survivors!

Yes, with breast cancer, there are survivors! - Survivors to organize rallies. Survivors to share their stories. Survivors to take care of their children, and to play with their grandchildren. Of course, unfortunately, not everyone survives, and that is tragic. What causes breast cancer? There is no clear cut answer. Being overweight and genetics are possible reasons, but many cases of breast cancer fall outside those two reasons. Don't get me wrong - I think it is great that we have survivors to promote breast cancer causes.

You know what is even more devastating than breast cancer in women? November was "Lung Cancer Awareness Month," yet I did not see one article, one march, one

rally, or one anything to promote it. Why? There are two types of lung cancer - small cell and large cell. Lung cancer is very rarely diagnosed before it is in Stage II. The five year survival rate for large cell lung cancer is less than 1/2 of 1%. The five year survival rate of small cell lung cancer diagnosed at Stage II is "0%". The bottom line is, there are just no survivors to organize any rallies!

Now, the most disturbing fact: Last year, more women died from lung cancer than breast cancer, uterine cancer, and ovarian cancer combined!!!!!!

What causes lung cancer in women? You probably already know where I am going - over 95% of all women who die from lung cancer smoked. Unlike breast cancer where there is still a lot of guessing,

the cause of lung cancer in women is crystal clear.

Now, if you are a woman who smokes, I want you to pay close attention to what I am going to say. It is a proven fact if you smoke, your children are more likely to smoke. You are setting an example for them that may cause them to have a habit that will effect their health throughout their lives, not to mention the financial burden of just buying the cigarettes.

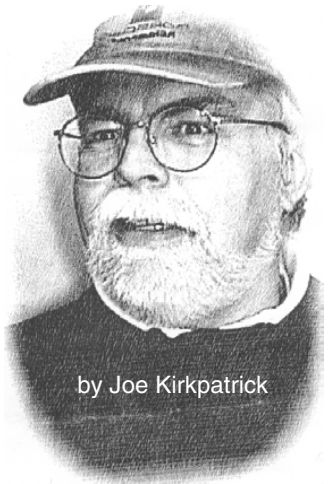
I want you to close your eyes, and imagine what I am about to say - you have had a persistent cough, and have begun to spit up a bit of blood. You finally go to the doctor, who does X-rays, various blood tests, and perhaps an MRI. You go back a week later, and the doctor takes you into his office. With a solemn look, he says, "I'm

afraid it is not good - you have lung cancer, and it is somewhere between Stage II and Stage III - we can do chemo and radiation and perhaps slow the progression, but that's about it." If you hear those words, what is the first thought that pops into your mind? Unfortunately, it's probably, "I need to go out and smoke." As you stand outside the doctor's office filling your lungs with another round of smoke, your life will flash through your mind at 1000 miles per second! If you have a 12 year old at home, you've just been told you won't live to see them graduate from high school; you've just been told you won't attend their wedding some day; you've just been told you won't be around to see your grandchildren some day.

As you take another draw from your cigarette, ask yourself - "was it worth it?"

Today, there is little or no awareness about women with lung cancer - but fortunately, there are more ways to quit smoking than ever. See your doctor - get help! Don't be one of the 68,800 women who die each year from lung cancer! Breast cancer victims did not have a choice - You do!

Alarmingly, since first publishing this article several years ago, 25.5% of all high school students in Tennessee still smoke. In the US, smoking related illnesses still kill more people in the US than al-



by Joe Kirkpatrick

cohol, AIDS, car wrecks, drugs, murders, and suicides combined. Twenty children per day in Tennessee become smokers - very few will ever quit.

- Any comments? Contact Joe Kirkpatrick at: tristateim@aol.com

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