



## Cancer Q & A

with Kathy Kanavos

### YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT CANCER

Dear Kathy,

My breast cancer was not detected in mammograms. I found it myself. I'm concerned that my doctor told me that 'The Hospital's Gold Policy' is to continue to use mammograms on me to check for recurrence. I am extremely anxious about this.

Melisa in Boston

Dear Melisa,

I know how you feel because, like you, I found my cancer both times after mammograms missed them. I know that what I now say may sound harsh, but it is what I wrote in my book, **SURVIVING CANCERLAND: The Psychic Aspects of Healing**. Insanity is repeating the same process over and over expecting a different outcome. Using mammography as a follow-up tool when it did not work the first time is insane.

You have reason to be concerned. You need the 'Platinum Policy.' So, don't be shy. Politely explain to your doctor that mammograms did not work before, then yell and scream if necessary to get the MRI you need, yearly.

Good luck and don't give up.

You are not alone.

Dear Kathy,

I have been diagnosed with breast cancer and have considered joining a cancer support group. Do you have any suggestions?

Linda in Framingham

Dear Linda,

Participating in support groups and other activities associated with surviving cancer is a great way of meeting and drawing helpful information from other patients in the same boat. I found that group members take pride in their newfound ability to help one another cope with the changes that are taking place on a daily basis. No one can understand what you are experiencing like another person going through those changes with you. Try to stay positive in the group when someone voices negative emotions and let your inner light shine through.

Please email your questions to  
[kathykanavos@yahoo.com](mailto:kathykanavos@yahoo.com)

Dear Kathy,

I am a breast cancer survivor and want to be of help to other breast cancer patients but I don't know if I am ready to take that step, yet. How did you know when you were ready to help others?

Janet in MA

Dear Janet,

I applaud you for thinking of helping other patients. I do understand your concerns. They are perfectly natural. I, too, was worried about how I would react to someone else's cancer-related emotional and physical pain.

However, once I was actively involved as a phone counselor for the R. A. BLOCH CANCER FOUNDATION, I realized that the fastest way to take my attention off of my own fears was to help others. You have a wealth of information from

experience that you are not even aware you possess, and it will not be evident to you until someone asks you for help. Just hearing the voice of a survivor can be a godsend to someone still battling cancer. I found helping others therapeutic and cathartic. I hope you do, too.

Dear Kathy,

Friends have told me not to look any information up on the Internet concerning my breast cancer because it is all negative and will only scare me. I am very tempted to do some research. What should I do?

Hali

Dear Hali,

I think I understand why your friends are trying to protect you from the information on the Internet. I think they have your best interests at heart. There is so much information available on the Internet. Much of it is difficult to understand and some of it may not be accurate.

However, when I was going through my treatment both times, I did research on the Internet and double and triple checked the available facts. The trick was not allowing the negative facts and statistics to affect me. You must stay positive right now.

That said, let me say this: Knowledge about your type and grade of cancer, the treatment alternatives, and the proper supportive care is essential. Knowledge is power. It will allow you to make informed decisions, to self-advocate, to anticipate potential problems, and to feel a sense of control over your life.

I hope this helps you in your decision. And you can always do what I did. I asked my friends to forward me all the positive information they found concerning my cancer on the Internet.

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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 [website](#) and her [blog](#) .

In addition to answering readers' cancer questions for [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](#) and [Facebook](#)