



Cancer Q & A

with Kathy Kanavos

Ask Me Anything!

KATHY O'KEEFE KANAVOS ADDRESSES YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT CANCER

Dear Kathy,

is there somewhere or an organization that can help with bills and making ends meet during cancer treatment?

Karen

Hi, Karen,

I just learned that 2nd Quarter Applications for financial assistance are now available through the "Help Now Fund," through the Breast Cancer Charities of America.

Here is the contact information and a short description of the BCCA:

BCCA is committed to helping as many people as possible through those financial struggles with the Help Now Fund. With the help of private donations, this fund helps cancer patients with basic necessities: rent, overdue electric bills and every day needs. If you or someone you know could benefit from this program, visit www.thebreastcancercharities.org/help-now-fund

Please contact them.

Ask me anything.

Kathy

Dear Kathy,

I am finding the hair loss to be distressing but am trying to keep it light and fun. I cut my hair shorter when I first got my chemotherapy treatment plan as I have had long hair for over 30 years. Then I had my daughter do some fun colored wash-out highlights. My grandkids loved it.

When it started coming out in clumps, my husband cut it back to about a quarter inch. My grandson said I looked awesome and that now he and I matched.

Now it is starting to feel very uncomfortable when I sleep. It feels like little needles in my head. Although we have had fun with it, I still feel depression over losing my hair.

Do you think it would help to shave my head or will the pins and needles still be there? It helps me to talk about the feelings that I am going through, sharing seems to lighten the load somewhat.

Paula

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos was interviewed on the Dr. Bernie Siegel Show on January 3rd

Follow either of these links to listen to her interview about Healing Dreams:

[HealthyLife.Net with Bernie Seigel, MD](#)
[Direct Link to Kathy's Interview](#)

Dear Paula,

I'm so glad to see you having fun with your hair by involving your daughter and grandchildren. Treatment affects the whole family and the negative and positive aspects of how we deal with it can be a matter of perception.

I too had long hair all my life and lost it during chemo, but to my delight it grew back fuller and as beautiful as ever. I cried so hard when I first learned that I would be bald, then I got over it and went out and found a wig that looked just like my real hair. That way I was ready and no one knew the difference.

If you are suffering from pins and needles, it may be time to get rid of the dead roots. I learned that the best course of action is to hold it firmly by the roots and gently peel it off the scalp. I know this sounds scary but by pulling it out by the burned roots it does not feel like porcupine quills, which is the result you will have if you shave it off. At night I wore a warm ski cap to keep my head warm.

Before you know it, you will be looking over your shoulder at this experience.

Ask me anything.

Kathy

Dear Kathy,

I was diagnosed with breast cancer, had a lumpectomy ten days later, and my dad passed away suddenly six days later. I put my treatment on hold for a month until I could get back from the funeral and settling his estate, but then my son was diagnosed with cancer.

I really, really had not wanted to do chemo at all. I have seen first-hand with my sister's lung cancer what it is like and thought I would never do that. But here I am, because I want to live, and I want to help my son through his treatment. My husband wants this and I have 5 kids/steps and 14 grandkids to see grow. My daughters have said they will help me during treatment. I will do radiation after the chemo.

Am I doing the right thing?

Mary

Hi, Mary,

Sometimes it seems like stressful things in life come in threes: you, your father and then your son. Your father is watching over you from the other side. I think things are going to start looking up! How wonderful that you were able to tell your son that he will not be going through this rocky road alone. You will be beside him every step of the way, and he beside you.

You sound like a very strong woman and I don't believe you would do anything you did not want to do. If you are doing it, then I believe it is the right thing for you.

I survived Stage 2 and Stage 4 breast cancer, and that was 8 and 13 years ago. Treatments have gotten better and I believe you are going to be just fine. Focus on that. The fact that your family is there for you is such a positive influence on your emotions. You were there for your daughters when they were growing up and tended to them during their childhood diseases. Now they will be there for you.

I hope you see the beauty in this situation. You are surrounded by love and support.

Ask me anything.

Kathy

Dear Kathy,

I am in treatment for breast cancer. I am still working, not full days but doing about six and a half hours work and one hour drive time round trip.

Trying to keep up around the house is falling by the wayside as my fatigue increases. My husband cooks sometimes and does dishes but wouldn't know a mop if one hit him in the head. Thank goodness for my daughters. They are coming over tomorrow to clean. Is this fatigue normal and how long does it last?

Jenny

Hi, Jenny,

Yes, unfortunately, fatigue is a common side-effect of cancer treatment and often of the disease itself.

It sounds like you have wonderful daughters and a husband who means well. Please check out www.cleaningforareason.org They offer 4 FREE cleanings for women undergoing cancer treatment. It was the easiest help I have ever asked for. You obtain a short note from your doctor that you are undergoing cancer treatment, complete a super short form and fax it in. They will have a company in your area contact you. Having a clean house really cheered me up!

Ask me anything.

Kathy

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos is a two-time breast cancer survivor who penned **SURVIVING CANCERLAND: The Psychic Aspects of Healing**.

She is represented by Scovil, Galen & Ghosh Literary Agency & **Steve Allen Media**. She's a phone counselor for R.A. BLOCH Cancer Foundation, Q&A cancer columnist for *CapeWomenOnlineMagazine*, an inspirational speaker, mentor, cancer volunteer, and Cambridge Who's Who Executive Professional of the Year 2009-2010.

Kathy was recently interviewed on the Dr. Pat radio show, and told how her dreams found her cancer that the doctors missed. You can listen to a podcast [here](#).

Visit her [website](#) and [Facebook page](#); follow her on [Twitter](#) ; and connect with her on [LinkedIn](#).

If you are struggling with your own diagnosis, or know someone who is, please email Kathy with your questions and concerns at:
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