

surviving breast cancer

Carol's poem, which helped her survive breast cancer

The cure for this ill,
Is not to sit still,
Or frowst with a
book by the fire,
But to take a large
hoe,
And a shovel also,
And dig till you
gently perspire.



On yer bike: Colin and Carol Evans with the motorcycle Carol called her psychiatrist. It was the freedom of driving on the open road and the strength of her family that helped her to survive breast cancer.

Riding a motorcycle on the open road and positive thinking helped Carol Evans to become a breast cancer survivor. **Craig Lawson** reports.

It was 1996 when Carol Evans first discovered a lump in her right breast and, after an examination with her doctor, the initial test result came back negative.

Living in Invercargill and working as a dental receptionist Carol Evans had experienced a benign cyst in her breast before.

But this time she knew it was more than a cyst.

"It just didn't feel right. There was something about it and I knew the lump needed to be removed," she says.

The lump was surgically removed and a test result proved her intuition was correct – she had breast cancer.

"I was shattered and it took a few days to get my head around things," recalls the 62-year-old breast cancer survivor.

Immediate surgery was arranged to stop the cancer spreading.

The doctors removed a quarter of her breast and took lymph nodes from the surrounding area.

"It was just a scary time as you don't know what the future holds," she says.

Telling her two sons, David, 40, and Steven, 43, was also hard.

"They were shattered. It's just frightening saying the word cancer, but it's quite amazing when you're in a crisis situation the people that jump to your aid," she says.

At the time, her 10-year-old grandchild Cory helped out by making a relaxation space for her.

"He called it my secret garden and he used plants, wooden chairs and a stone bench," she says.

It was where she would

spend some of her time resting, reading and healing.

She then had seven months of chemotherapy and radiotherapy to stop any cancer in the body.

Her husband of 43 years, Colin, recalls how terrible it was to watch his wife go through chemotherapy.

"It was just awful, this big needle injecting this liquid that almost glowed into her," he says.

He explains how important it is for husbands to talk about their emotions and what they are going through.

"Men can bottle things up but they need to talk and seek help if needed," he says.

They recall how there were a lot of tears during the treatment process, but it was the laughter and staying positive that got them through.

"While you do get depressed, those were the times I would grab my spade and get in the garden," she says.

When needing time out from the stress of the treatment process, she enjoyed hitting the open road.

She would refer to her motorcycle as her psychiatrist because, after being for a drive, it felt like a refreshing therapy session.

"The release of being on the bike, just being on my own and with my thoughts, is what I enjoyed."

Mrs Evans stresses the importance of a regular self-check examination, so when something doesn't feel right you can take the required action.

Regular tests show Mrs Evans' cancer has not returned.

She now keeps a fresh outlook on life and has learnt to find joy in as much of her day as possible. "Life is something special so get out and enjoy it as much as you can."

► the Invercargill Breast Cancer Support Group meets at the Southland Museum Artworks Cafe on the second Saturday of each month at 10.30am.

naughty or nice

Which one will you be this weekend?

Naughty in Pink:

- 60ml Raspberry and Lemon 26000 Vodka
 - Grapefruit juice
- Serve in the most gorgeous glass possible
Garnish with a slice of fresh lime
Naughty is the name of the game and you invented it!

or

Nice – Pink Passion:

- 6 large strawberries
 - 1/2 cup of your favourite yoghurt
 - 1/2 cup of vanilla or strawberry ice cream
 - 1/2 cup of milk
- Blend all ingredients and you have a delicious fruit drink. Additional fruits such as bananas may be added.
This will keep your energy levels high for a nice weekend of passion.

trend alert

Fashion reporter **Craig Lawson** brings his best-of-the-best trend alerts.

PANDORA bracelets are a great way to look stylish and support the fight against breast cancer.

When you buy any Pandora gold or silver beads, 15 per cent will be donated to the New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation.

The statistics send a strong message that we need to work together to overcome this disease.

One in 10 women in New Zealand will develop breast cancer at some stage.

Seventy-five percent of these women will be over 50 years of age.

Twenty-five per cent of cases still occur before the age of 50.

We can win the fight.

► Bracelets and beads are available from McLeay Jewellers, Invercargill.

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