

Facing up to the cancer threat

The chances are, one day I'll be told that I've got cancer. I think it's about one-in-three for the 'big ones' - and also one-in-three for skin cancer. If cancer comes my way, I'll probably be terrified. I'll remember what happened with cancer with family and friends. What's my cancer going to do to me? Will it kill me? What will the treatment be like?

I don't want months of chemo or radiotherapy and lose all my hair. If I'm going to die, I want to die with some dignity and not as a shadow of the person I was. I guess you'd think the same as me.

The thought of getting prostate cancer fills me with total dread. Lung cancer, too. I'm not into pain and being torn open. But those are the choices. Chemo. Radiotherapy. Surgery.

There are a dozen or more cancers that could get me. One of the worst is pancreatic cancer. That's usually a killer. I enjoy the odd cigar and a drink, and I'm told that puts me at greater risk of getting mouth or throat cancer. I know how much the surgeon would rip out if that was the case.

So, why am I telling you all this? Have I got some sort of magic, miracle solution? Well no, but I do know about a new therapy that may help me avoid the knife, and perhaps the chemo and radiotherapy as well. It's called Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) and it can kill cancer with a single treatment and no knife.



PDT's used now for some cancers, but not all of them. Most of the new treatments are being developed so slowly without the funding of the major drug companies. So that's why I'm backing this campaign.

KILLING Cancer, Lodge Farm Cottage, Grafham Road, Brampton, Huntingdon, PE28 0DB.
www.killingcancer.co.uk. Charity registered in England. Charity number: 1109926

I've met people who've been cured with PDT. You can have PDT now for mouth cancer, skin cancer and something called Barrett's oesophagus. The medics are starting trials for patients with brain tumours, pancreatic cancer and breast cancer. Experimentally, they are working on PDT for early lung cancer, prostate and even penile cancer and cancers of the vulva and cervix.

PDT uses a light-sensitive drug, injected and absorbed by the tumour that, when activated by light with pin-point accuracy, knocks out the oxygen supply to the tumour just long enough to kill it. And there are no major side-effects with the new PDT treatments.

If one million men and women 'Millionaire' viewers all donated £10, the £10 million could see PDT approved and in national use within a couple of years for three or four of the most deadly cancers. Our fund raising is vital.

I've already made my donation, and now it's up to you. It's our choice. It's your choice. But it's also about our children and their future and the future of cancer care.

To donate, just go to the KILLING Cancer website, and follow the links, or post your cheque to the address below. You can click on the KILLING Cancer logo and it will take you straight to the 'Home' page.

Chris Tarrant
TV Presenter and Dad

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