

When Cancer Hits Home: Cancer Treatment and Prevention Options for Breast, Colon, Lung, Prostate and Other Common Types

Patrick Maguire

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Although discussions about cancer have come a long way since the days when the word was whispered, if even said at all, there's still a need for clear, straightforward information on the topic, believes Dr. Patrick Maguire, author and cancer specialist. Providing treatment options for common cancer types as well as prevention advice, Maguire offers a well-written and much-needed guidebook that will be appreciated by anyone affected by this challenging diagnosis.

Maguire was inspired to write after the loss of both his parents and his father-in-law to cancer within a short time frame. As an oncologist, he'd had abundant exposure to the workings of cancer, but his personal experience helped him to add a different viewpoint: that of a family member watching a loved one go through treatment and loss. These two perspectives, of knowledgeable physician and of family caretaker, combine nicely to give chapters a blend of research and warmth.

In the book's first part, Maguire focuses on cancer prevention, looking at the latest recommendations for reducing cancer risk. Starting with the relationship between cancer risk and nutrition, Maguire digs into dietary data, but admits that many questions remain, and he expresses frustration at the "snake oil salesmen" who prey upon people's fears and hopes with so-called "cancer prevention" foods and products. Even with that caveat, his information is hugely useful and backed by numerous research studies.

Exercise also plays a vital role in reducing cancer risk, he notes. Citing extensive research on the topic, particularly for breast cancer and lung cancer, Maguire adeptly makes his case for why everyone should spend less time on the couch and more time on the move.

For those facing a cancer diagnosis themselves, or dealing with friends or family who are undergoing treatment, the book's second section—on common cancer types—should prove invaluable. Maguire covers the twenty most common types, including breast cancer, leukemia, liver cancer, melanoma, ovarian cancer, and colon cancer. He starts each section with a patient's story, created from the thousands of real patients he's met and treated during his years as an oncologist.

With a friendly tone that helps boost the understanding of complex material, Maguire presents important terminology without bogging down his explanations with medical jargon. Key concepts for each cancer type are included, as well as warning signs and symptoms, staging process and treatment options.

Maguire's talents as a writer are likely the same as his skills as a physician: he articulates risks, research, and treatment in a straightforward, informed manner, but also includes thoughtful, personal stories that connect him to patients and their experience. Whether someone is looking for cancer prevention tips or trying to learn more about a specific cancer, this guide should prove to be a stellar resource.

ELIZABETH MILLARD (February 17, 2011)

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