Monty White fights colon cancer

Monty White is about as non-pretentious as they come.

Diagnosed with colon cancer nearly three years ago, the former bull rider and team roper also isn't one to fret.

"There's no sense in sitting around and worrying all the time," the 52-year-old said.

If anyone does the worrying, it's White's wife of 30 years—Cindy—who also does most of the talking.

Cindy, 53, tells how her husband's cancer was discovered during a routine physical and subsequent colonoscopy in January of 2010.

Doctors guessed the cancer at Stage II, which meant it had spread, and prescribed two months of intensive radiation and chemotherapy to shrink the tumor on Monty's colon.

That May, Cindy said her husband underwent surgery to remove the tumor that was still large enough to cause some blockage.

"They got the tumor but found out his lymph nodes were involved," she said.

More chemotherapy followed until September of 2010. That December, Monty had another scan and tenacious cancer cells showed up in his liver and lungs.

Until last August, Monty received chemotherapy biweekly from Heartland Hematology and Oncology in Kearney.

“The doctors found it amazing that he could tolerate it that long,” Cindy said.

Monty said one doctor told him he’d never treated a patient with that kind of chemotherapy for such a long time period.

However the effectiveness of the chemotherapy prescription began to diminish so Monty was switched to another kind.

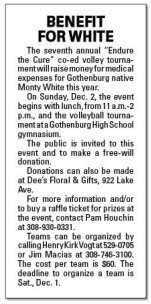
Results are unknown at this time since it’s taken some time to get the dosage regulated, Cindy said.

“I feel good,” Monty said, noting that he started taking painkillers a few months ago for aches and pains he associates with arthritis from old rodeo injuries.

Cindy thinks some of the pain is from chemotherapy, adding that her husband has “a high pain tolerance.”

When he was first diagnosed, Monty continued working at the former Land O Lakes Purina Feeds plant that manufactured livestock feed.

But in February of 2012, the company was taken over by a private business and his job—after 25 years—was terminated.



BENEFIT FOR WHITE

The seventh annual "Endure the Cure" co-ed volley tournament will raise money for medical expenses for Gothenburg native Monty White this year.

On Sunday, Dec. 2, the event begins with lunch, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., and the volleyball tournament at a Gothenburg High School gymnasium.

The public is invited to this event and to make a free-will donation.

Donations can also be made at Dee's Floral & Gifts, 922 Lake Ave.

For more information and/or to buy a raffle ticket for prizes at the event, contact Pam Houchin at 308-930-0331.

Teams can be organized by calling Henry Kirk Vogt at 529-0705 or Jim Macias at 308-746-3100. The cost per team is $60. The deadline to organize a team is Sat., Dec. 1.

Monty chose not to seek other employment because of chemotherapy appointments in Kearney. That, perhaps, has been the biggest challenge so far.

“It gets boring.”

Describing her husband as a workaholic, Cindy said the transition has been “quite a change.”

Still Monty keeps somewhat busy caring for a cow-calf operation of 40 head of Angus cattle and four horses.

Living with her husband’s cancer has had its ups and downs for Cindy, who said they hear both good and not-so-good reports from doctors.

Completing insurance paperwork and keeping it in order has been overwhelming at times, she said, noting her gratefulness that Monty has long-term disability and cancer insurance and that she can leave her bookkeeping job at I-80 Pit Stop to take him to appointments.

“Chemo is very expensive,” Cindy said.

Although she's been able to figure out insurance issues, Cindy advised that someone new to such a situation shouldn't hesitate to ask for help.

For Cindy, her husband's cancer has made her focus on different things than she did before.

"A lot of things I thought were important, aren't now," she said. "I live more day to day and pay more attention to what's around me, like spending more quality time with family."

That's advice Cindy offers to anyone, whether a family member is battling cancer or not.

Monty's upbeat attitude about his condition has also "done him a world of good."

As does "having family and friends around that keep him laughing," she said.

"It's in God's hands," Cindy said. "No matter what happens, prayers are going up."

For Monty, his work in the saddle isn't finished.

Although he's hung up his bull-riding rope, the cowboy recently bought himself a team-roping horse.

"I want to start working with him," Monty said.

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