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Breast Cancer Awareness Month Too Commercial?

More than 40,000 women died of breast cancer last year. Though several groups are working to find a cure, some fear the cause is falling victim to too much commercialization.

If you've been to any retailer lately you've seen pink -- pink pens, pink notebooks, pink decorations -- all embellished with pink ribbons.

Even New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady is wearing pink.

"You almost don't want to see too much pink because then people stop thinking what's behind it all," Sarah Ness, with the [American Cancer Society](#), said.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and on the surface, the goal is to spread the word.

But some say the pink ribbons we see so much during the month of October may be doing less to help promote finding a cure for breast cancer and more to line the pockets of retailers who slap them on their products every chance they get.

"For me, it's personally offensive, and I think for a lot of women who've had breast cancer it's just a very hard thing to see," Barbara Brenner said.

Brenner is a breast cancer survivor and executive director of [Breast Cancer Action](#).

Her California-based operation is behind the "Think Before You Pink" campaign. Since no one owns the pink ribbon, any company can attach it to their products. And plenty do.

The problem is, Brenner says, your money may not be helping as much as you think. Before buying pink, she suggests:

- Finding out what percentage of your purchase is going to breast cancer research.
- Asking if there is a maximum donation? If it's already been met, your donation is going straight to the business's bottom line.
- Checking to see where the money is going.

"It's very powerful, consumers have enormous power in this country," Brenner said.

The other problem is that with so much pink out there, some Americans think the problem of breast cancer has been solved. Breast Cancer Action has even been asked to move on to other diseases.

But the good news is more people are aware of breast cancer and women are living longer with the disease.

"It's not a death sentence anymore," Ness said.

The American Cancer Society says catching the disease early is still the key to survival.

"Women are living longer. The early prevention and detection is huge in terms of catching it early and being

able to save lives," Ness said.

So despite pink saturation in the marketplace, both Ness and Brenner say many more strides must be made to reach more women and find a cure.