

## Rethinking 'pink' - Some marketing pink products may not benefit cancer research

By PEG MCNICHOL

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Holland, MI — The last thing Denise Todd wanted to do after being diagnosed with breast cancer was to start wearing pink.

Todd, a registered nurse who works at Holland Hospital, is healthy again and loves her pink ribbons, car magnets and clothes in a certain pink shade.

"I felt I earned it. I wear it like a badge," she said Friday. But she was unhappy to learn pink is being commercialized by some companies, with little or no benefit going to cancer research.

"I think it's a little deceptive," she said.

Just as women banded together to raise breast cancer awareness, others are working to educate consumers through a "Think Before You Pink" campaign.

The goal is marketing transparency, said Joyce Bichler, deputy director of Breast Cancer Action ([www.bcaction.org](http://www.bcaction.org)), which owns the trademarked national "Think ..." campaign.

"Our real concern is that people should make their decisions and ask the right questions before they make their purchases," she said. "If you look at many pink products out there, they don't say how much money is going (to research) nor to whom it is going. People feel when they see pink, they are doing something to help. And that's not always the case."

Six years ago, a national watchdog and educational advocacy group based in San Francisco, Breast Cancer Action, trademarked a campaign called "Think Before You Pink," along with a Web site, [www.thinkbeforeyoupink.org](http://www.thinkbeforeyoupink.org).

This year, the campaign got a regional boost from the American Cancer Society Great Lakes Division, which sent out press releases promoting [www.thinkbeforeyoupink.org](http://www.thinkbeforeyoupink.org).

"We think it's great," said Emily Coyle, a spokeswoman. "There's so many organizations out there trying to raise awareness about breast cancer. Everybody wants to feel good about where their money's going these days."

Consumers can find a host of thoughtful tips on the "Think ..." site, she said.

"Breast cancer is the No. 1 concern of women, but detected early it's 98 percent survivable," Coyle said. "We're very selective about the organizations that we partner with to promote awareness."

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer is the American Cancer Society's premier event to raise awareness and funds to fight breast cancer. It is an opportunity for the community to celebrate breast cancer survivors, educate women about early detection and prevention, and raise money to fund life-saving research.

The American Cancer Society Great Lakes Division hosts its annual fundraising 5K walk, Making Strides in Grand Rapids, on Saturday. For more information, visit [www.cancer.org/strides](http://www.cancer.org/strides) online.

