

## Breast cancer awareness extends to men, too, as Race for Cure participant shows



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Bret Miller is like a lot of 24-year-olds, a college graduate who is holding down two jobs.

But he stands out as a breast cancer patient. Miller is part of the 1 percent of diagnosed patients who are male, and his doctor told him that the disease is even more rare in men as young as he is.

The American Cancer Society estimates there are about 2,000 new cases of male breast cancer each year, and about 390 men die from it.

“And even way less are under 65,” said Miller, who lives in Prairie Village. “The average age, what my surgeon said, is 64 to 65. To be 24 and getting it is definitely a shock. ... It’s one of the cancers, like lung and brain and pancreatic, one of those that can happen to anybody.”

Miller was one of about 27,000 people who participated Sunday in the Komen Greater Kansas City Race for the Cure, an event that helped raise more than \$1 million. The annual event has raised more than \$8 million since 1992 in support of breast cancer education, screening and treatment.

Miller was 17 when he found a lump while scratching his pectoral muscle. That was two weeks before a scheduled checkup for college. The doctor told him not to worry about the lump unless its size changed. It was probably a calcium buildup, the doctor said.

After Miller finished college, a doctor suggested getting scans. Miller had a lumpectomy in April and a mastectomy May 18. The next day, doctors called to tell him the mass was breast cancer.

“It was a shock at first,” Miller said. “I didn’t think it was real for a second there.”

The cancer was stage 1, the lowest grade, and hadn’t spread. He is undergoing four sessions of chemotherapy, with a second round on Tuesday.

There are still worries, though.

“They said I had a 22 percent chance of it coming back in 10 years,” Miller said, “but doing chemo, only four rounds, would lower that possibility to 10 percent. I figured, why not? Lower the chances as much as possible.”

Miller buzzed his hair last week, and the rest has begun to fall out. He plans to shave his head in the next few days. Other than that, Miller said he hasn’t felt any major side effects from the treatment.

In the meantime, he hopes to let more men know about the possibility of breast cancer. His surgeon in Kansas City has seen just 13 cases.

“He said the biggest problem is that they don’t get in there soon enough and they can’t save them,” said Peggy Miller, Bret’s mother. “Awareness is the key for men because they don’t think they can get it. They don’t think anything of it. They’ve got to start talking to you guys, too.”

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### THE RESULTS

The 5K winners were Derek Tate of Mission on the men’s side, who came in at 15:59.81, and Rebeka Stowe of Olathe, who ran 18:11.67 on the women’s side.