

The Spokesman-Review

CBD cream helps cancer patients heal burns

By Jean Arthur

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When Karen Sheady began medical treatment for breast cancer in 2013, she endured painful burns and blistering from radiation therapy, a treatment that uses high-powered beams of energy to kill cancerous cells.

Now the Missoula, Mont., resident has developed a product to help other patients counter the pain and blistered skin from radiation.

Lost Remedy's Burn Formula is one of a dozen cannabidiol (CBD)-based products that Sheady manufactures and sells. She uses organically grown "carrier oils and therapeutic grade essential oils in combination with organic and lab-tested CBD oil from hemp" to create lotions and balms.

CBD is a natural compound in hemp and cannabis plants that is said to reduce pain and inflammation. It doesn't cause intoxication; a different compound in these plants, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is associated with psychoactive properties.

"I developed the product for myself, and it was a blissful success," said Sheady, 65, from her Missoula manufacturing facility. Her career as a journeyman tool and die maker led to metal- and woodworking in her husband's custom door business. She's quite the entrepreneur, especially with her newfound medical knowledge.

"I came to understand the dynamic of how CBD topicals work," she said. "Everybody is equipped with receptors for CBD. Couple that with other targeted ingredients and I'm constantly amazed with what happens."

Sheady launched Lost Remedy in 2016 with the Burn Formula and soon developed other CBD-based products, including Joint and Muscle Relief, Arthritis Salve, First Aid Balm and Skin Replenishing Lotion.

Her products also include optiphen, a liquid paraben-free and formaldehyde-free preservative, and a blend of essential oils that soothe irritated skin – and smell nice, too.

Initially, Sheady encountered difficulty in marketing and shipping Lost Remedy products, until Jan. 1, 2019, "when the DEA and FDA acknowledged CBD's therapeutic benefits" and removed federal restrictions on distribution.

Challenges remain, however.

"It's hard to get the medical community on board because of (long-term contracts) of medical suppliers and the powerful pharmaceutical industry," she explained, noting that pharmaceutical companies lobby doctors, hospitals and legislators to speak out against CBD products.

One loyal customer, Margaret Warzecha of Mundelein, Ill., found Lost Remedy through the Leafly.com, an online directory of cannabis growers, retailers and products. The 56-year-old had never tried anything with CBD or marijuana until she got sick.

“I do have a medical card for the state of Illinois. Friends recommended CBD cream. I then started Googling products,” said Warzecha, who struggles with several pain issues. She lists erythromelalgia, fibromyalgia, psoriatic arthritis, Lyme disease, Type 2 diabetes, Reynaud syndrome, gastroparesis and high blood pressure as “the big ones.”

“My biggest issue is the pain between my toes to my foot from the erythromelalgia.”

According to Mayo Clinic, “erythromelalgia is a rare condition that causes extreme heat, pain and redness on the bottom of the feet.”

“All of the Lost Remedy products have worked for me,” noted Warzecha. “My favorite is the Burn Formula because it helps so many different things. I use it on my feet for the burning and redness. If you personally haven’t tried the cream, I highly recommend it. It does not have a strong odor. A little goes a long way.”

Another cancer survivor, Tracy Bakke of Princeton, Minn., underwent radiation therapy treatments in 2017.

“With the last five radiation treatments, radiation was intense,” Bakke said. “That is when (my skin) started to peel, but the Burn Cream helped. I don’t really have any scarring, because of it. It made my skin soft.”

Ava Giglio of Tampa, Fla., ordered a sample of Lost Remedy’s Neuropathy Cream last year when she was looking for products to help her partner Sharon Kuist during chemotherapy treatment.

Kuist used the Burn Formula after radiation, which provided immediate relief. She used it three to four times daily, applying liberally.

“It was not only soothing for her, but relieved the ‘picking’ sensation she experienced during treatment,” said Giglio. Kuist continued to use the Burn Formula as she developed a few blisters in the last round of treatment.

“The Burn Formula seemed to speed up the healing process with the blisters, which have all cleared up now,” said Giglio. “Thank goodness for medical marijuana! And thank goodness for Lost Remedy.”

Shedy, now six years cancer-free, is eager to keep spreading the word.

“I’d love to hand a jar of Burn Formula to every woman who gets this horrible news of breast cancer,” said Shedy.