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Cancer therapy inspires popular Pinchers sauce

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NAPLES, Fla. The story behind the iconic “One Pepper” sauce served at Pinchers began with troubling news.

Tony Phelan, the founder of Pinchers and other popular restaurants in Southwest Florida was given between two months and two years to live after being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer 20 years ago.

“It had metastasized into my bones and when they asked my wife to come to the doctors office with me,” Phelan said. “We knew something was happening.”

Along with traditional medicine, alternative healing was part of Phelan’s treatment plan. His healer, a retired nurse, recommended eating peppers as a means to combat the cancer.

“When you sweat from eating peppers that’s endorphins in the oxygen going throughout your body... So I stared off with cayenne pepper,” Phelan said.

Researchers at the UCLA School of Medicine found consuming [cayenne pepper](#), which includes capsaicin, a component of chili peppers can help slow down the growth of prostate cancer cells, and possibly destroy them, according to the Cancer Treatment Centers of America.

What started as an alternative form of treatment, became a business venture. Phelan developed the “One Pepper” sauce at the Bonita Springs Pinchers location, using locally sourced ingredients, and continues to serve customers across Southwest Florida.

“People would come in the restaurant and start asking for it, so we started bottling it and we still make it ourselves,” Phelan said.

However, this signature sauce is just one part of his life. As a 20-year cancer survivor, Phelan expressed his joy and appreciation for family.

"I'm so blessed it's unbelievable," Phelan said.

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