

both minimum and maximum. If there is a guaranteed flat donation, your purchase is basically rendered unnecessary! If there is a guaranteed maximum, the maximum may have already been met by the time you make your purchase. A guaranteed minimum with no maximum cap is of course the best type of effort to support.

Also, keep in mind that some companies who have promised to make donations have been found not to be making them in the end.

Should I buy from a company just because they're "pink"-friendly?

Here's another way to think about it. The company is not really supporting breast cancer research. You are. Unless the company has offered a matching donation type of program or a guaranteed minimum donation, really it's your purchase and the purchase of other consumers that is going toward the breast cancer cause.

Companies bank on the fact that if you see two of an item—theirs and one from another company—you will be more likely to purchase theirs because of the fact that your purchase from them will go to a good cause. Some people don't mind that type of philosophy, while others will find it to be a sneaky way of advertising. It's up to you.

Okay, I'm not buying, but I still want to support breast cancer research.

What do I do?

Buying from these companies isn't necessarily a bad thing, nor something

you shouldn't do. The problem is the false sense of "doing good" that it creates, while an individual is actually doing very little. There is so much more we can do by being more actively involved, than by passively making a purchase that may give more of a "good feeling" than actually "doing good." The point of this brochure is not to keep you from buying "pink" products, which you can continue to do in good conscience in many instances, but rather to help encourage you to be a more informed consumer.

Simply put, the best way to support breast cancer research is *not* to purchase a product, but rather to make a direct donation to a charity you know and trust. You may also wish to encourage groups you are involved with (houses of worship, coworkers, etc.) to organize fundraisers for cancer research.

And money is not always the best answer for how to make a difference. If you are a loving and understanding friend and have a soft shoulder to lean on, you can profoundly make a difference in the life of someone who has breast cancer.



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## How to Think When it Comes to "Pink"



*Breast cancer awareness month comes around every October, and with it plenty of “pink” products (which may or may not actually be pink!) in store aisles. In October, or any other month of the year, you may be tempted to pick up as many “pink” items as you can in an effort to support breast cancer research, but it’s important to do your own research. Ask yourself the following questions as you look at each “pink” item.*

Do I really need this item, or do I just want to get something in return for my donation?

We may be tempted to buy something just because it will benefit a good cause, only to eventually realize that it was unwanted and unnecessary. Ask yourself if you really need the item, or if you are mostly interested in your hard-earned money going to a good cause. Remember that, in lieu of making a purchase, the entire purchase price of the product could be donated directly to your preferred organization . . . doing even more good.

One of the main problems of “pink” products is that plenty of individuals assume the entire purchase price goes to a charity and that the item, in return, is a “thank you” gift for the donation. This is almost always not true. In most instances, the company selling the item—not a charity—is the primary beneficiary of its sale.

Is this a good gift for my friend with breast cancer, or who is a breast cancer survivor?

This is a touchy subject. Many ladies who have dealt with breast cancer don’t want to be reminded of it on a daily basis, while other ladies are proud to “think pink.” It’s also possible that ladies will end up being given too many breast cancer awareness items. Before purchasing an item for a friend, it’s a good idea to pay attention to her preferences as an individual, or even to ask.

Does part of my purchase go to charity?

The scary truth is that *plenty* of breast cancer awareness products are just that . . . breast cancer *awareness* products. Companies will use clever phrases like, “Help increase awareness” to cause consumers to believe they are making a worthy donation to a cause. In reality, the company is often tugging on your heartstrings in order to encourage you to make a purchase that only benefits the company itself. Don’t *ever* purchase a “pink” item assuming without a clear guarantee that part of your purchase will benefit a cancer-related charity.

Has the offer expired?

Read the small print. There is often a “window” of time in which a portion of each sale will benefit a charity. It’s possible that the window of opportunity to help has already passed. The Fall season (September and October, especially) is when many of the campaigns are in full force.

Do all products in the line benefit the charity?

Companies may offer plenty of “pink” items, while only a certain number (as little as one!) of the items in the line actually will benefit a charity. Read the fine print before making a purchase and make sure the item you’re interested in is included.

What charity am I supporting?

A common phrase is that your purchase will “directly support research” or, even more grandly, “go towards a cure.” There is no grand charity called “breast cancer research” or “breast cancer cure.” Instead, organizations are plentiful. Before supporting a charity, mindful consumers like to know how much of each donation dollar goes to research, what types of other programs the organization is involved with (including social and political), what the employees’ salaries are, and much more. Remember that only a percentage of a donation generally goes to specifically support research.

How much of the purchase price actually goes to the charity?

Companies selling “pink” items often only offer pennies from your purchase to the charity. While it all may add up in the end, your individual purchase may not be making as big of an impact as you would like to believe.

Check for final donation limits that the company has promised to make,