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Biking on the Snoqualmie Valley Trail, North Bend resident Him Hall is training for a triathlon and raising funds to fight a rare tumor-causing disease.

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## Valley woman tackles triathlons to fight disease

By [SETH TRUSCOTT](#)

**Snoqualmie Valley Record Editor**

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The rare tumor-causing syndrome known as Von Hippel-Lindau Disease has changed North Bend resident Kim Hall's life.

But Hall isn't about to let it slow her down.

Hall has challenged herself to run two triathlons this summer to raise funds for a cure for the disease, a genetic disorder that makes people more likely to develop cancerous and non-cancerous tumors. The first, the Issaquah Triathlon, takes place on Saturday, May 30. Hall hopes to raise \$5,000 from sponsorships and donations towards a cure for the disease, known as VHL, by the end of the summer.

Two years ago, Hall discovered she had VHL during an ultrasound procedure at Overlake Hospital Medical Center. The scan found several tumors on her kidneys. At the same time, her sister was found to have ear tumors. Hall realized that her mother, who died of kidney cancer, also had the disease, which is passed down from generation to generation. VHL tumors can grow in your brain, ears or spine.

"There's basically a genetic defect," she said. "You have an ability in your body to stop tumor growth. My gene says, 'Sorry, I don't know what you're doing, go ahead.'"

Hall is part of a clinical trial by the National Institutes of Health.

In February of 2008, a doctor removed tumors from her kidneys using tiny robot arms. Now, Hall's physicians are keeping an eye on a small tumor in her pancreas.

Each year, she gets routine magnetic scans. She also works hard to eat smart, exercise and maintain a healthy regimen.

In a doctor's visit, Hall was told that one of her tumors seemed to have shrunk, likely due to her healthful lifestyle.

"I keep my eyes and ears open for things that improve health," Hall said. "Exercise is really important for me to be healthy and feel healthy."

Taking part in the upcoming triathlon is a celebration for Hall, who challenged herself to run one if recent tests were good. They were, and now she's steeling herself for the cold waters of Lake Sammamish, where she'll swim a quarter mile, then bike 15 miles and run three miles.

"It's an expression of how happy I am that I'm healthy," Hall said. "I'm going to finish this, because, to me, it's a gift that I'm physically OK right now."

In the run-up to the triathlons, Hall credits her husband Chris for spending time with their sons, Zach, Jacob and Josh, while she trains. She also thanks staff at the Si View pool for their help in preparing for her big swim.

Hall competed in a triathlon before her children were born, and remembers the swim as the greatest challenge.

"I have a real issue with the cold water," she said jokingly.

This is the first time she has raised funds for a cause. Her fundraising efforts will help provide for detection and cure efforts through the Von Hippel-Lindau Family Alliance.

Hall is working on a T-shirt using a design made by her brother-in-law, Justin Schaeffer. The design shows a human chromosome, and says 'I Tri for VHL.'

Most physicians have never heard of the disease, except in college, according to Hall. She said the disease was found in her by accident.

"I have to educate my pediatrician, because my kids have a 50 percent chance of having this," she said. "I want there to be research done so that they can have a cure."

Learn more about Hall's efforts at [www.firstgiving/kimbrehall.com](http://www.firstgiving/kimbrehall.com).

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