

By **ROBIN MIZRAHI**

The sudden death of Demi Moore's aunt from lung cancer has sparked fears that the Hollywood superstar may face a greater risk from the deadly disease that also claimed her mother's life.

The actress, 43, was heartbroken when her aunt Carolyn Sneed died suddenly in December - and friends say the latest cancer tragedy has finally scared Demi into quitting smoking.

She continued the habit even after her mom, Victoria Guynes - a heavy smoker - died in 1998 at 54. But now sources close to Demi say she has given up for good - and her husband, actor Ashton Kutcher, has even kicked tobacco to help support her.

Said a friend: "Demi smoked cigarettes for years. She lives an incredibly clean life otherwise. She doesn't drink alcohol or get near drugs, and she exercises regularly.

"But cigarettes were the vice she held on to and one day she could regret it. She's seen first-hand what cigarette smoking does to a person."

Lifetime smoker Carolyn, Demi's maternal aunt, died at 63 after a long battle with the disease.

Said the friend: "You would think Demi would have been frightened by so many cancer deaths in her immediate family, but she seemed to consider herself invincible for a long time.

"Demi does yoga and she doesn't touch booze or marijuana. But she just couldn't kick her cigarette habit - even after she sat at her mother's bedside watching her

WARNING!

LUNG CANCER FEARS AFTER DEMI LOSES AUNT

die of lung cancer."

As *The National Enquirer* has previously reported, Demi was estranged from her hard-living mother for five years. Virginia was arrested for writing bad checks and drunk driving, and at age 50 she posed nude for a raunchy magazine.

Insiders said Demi was embarrassed by her mother, who seemed unable to stay sober. But the actress buried the hatchet when she learned that Virginia was dying of lung cancer.

Said a source: "Demi finally came around and wanted to mend fences with her mother before it was too late."

But sadly, said the insider, Demi never made a final visit to her see

her dying aunt Carolyn.

"Demi was very close to Carolyn - much closer than she was to her own mother," said the source. "We were surprised that she didn't take the two-hour drive from Los Angeles to San Diego to see her.



SCARED STRAIGHT: Demi in her smoking days. Left, hubby Ashton. Center, Demi with her late mom

"But to be fair to Demi, doctors had said that Carolyn had about a year to live - no one expected her to take such a turn for the worse and to die so suddenly."

Medical researchers say that although tobacco is the major cause of

lung cancer, there is evidence of a hereditary link to lung cancer, and for people with this gene, any amount of smoking drastically increases their cancer risk.

In addition, according to the American Cancer Society, secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, other types of cancer and heart diseases in non-smokers.

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