A Cancer Story: The 5-Year Mark

I officially reached the five-year mark of my breast cancer surgery and was flooded with memories on the days leading up to my surgery day.

April 8, 2021 By Megan-Claire Chase

It was five years ago today that I had my breast cancer surgeries at Northside Hospital Women's Center in Atlanta, GA. I have officially reached the five-year mark, which is apparently a big milestone. I'm flooded with memories on the days leading up to my surgery day.

Courtesy of Megan Claire Chase

I had a blood transfusion two weeks before to help boost my system for the surgeries. To this day, I am pleased as punch to know my blood type is B+ and not O. I thought it was hilarious and would yell out "I'm B+" in my cheerleader voice. In fact, I still do it. Maybe it was watching too much True Blood on repeat, but I felt special knowing my blood type wasn't the common O. Of course, I nearly vomited when I got the blood transfusion – two bags of blood. Those suckers were huge! I had one bag of O and another bag of B+. It's a strange and thick feeling having someone else's blood infused into you. I had many thoughts whirling in my mind.

What somewhat brought me down from feeling like an actress on Grey’s Anatomy was thinking about whose blood I was getting? I hate to say that my first thought and fear was what if the donor was a racist? Then I paused again and thought what if the donor was a serial killer? After six hours of having two bags of blood slowly infused, I was shocked when I saw my reflection. Had I become Bella from Twilight? My face, neck, and chest were flushed red. What freaked me out for a minute was seeing my eyes red. I kept looking for Edward on my way home. My humor has always remained intact.

Courtesy of Megan Claire Chase

Now it was surgery day. It was outpatient with no overnight stay. I was only a little nervous because I had complete faith in my breast cancer surgeon and plastic surgeon. They worked exceptionally well together. I can honestly say I still have a total girl crush on them. My breast cancer surgeon has major personality and humor, plus brilliance! She really helped me push through the last three chemo treatments when I was ready to give up. My plastic surgeon is the gentlest doctor I've ever dealt with and has magic hands. I never felt uncomfortable with him. As he came in to draw on the areas on my chest, his voice was so calm and gentle. He talked me through everything he was doing and made sure I did not look in the mirror. Smart move.

As I was being prepped for the surgeries, I had another laugh because the nurse put this silver aluminum foil looking blanket and cap on me. I looked like a bloated baked potato!

The only thing I remember before the anesthesia knocked me out was asking if I could keep my favorite chemo hat on underneath the baked potato cap.

Lumpectomy of left breast

Sentinel lymph node dissection

Reduction of both breasts

Reconstruction of both breasts

Courtesy of Megan Claire Chase

I wish I could say I woke up feeling just groggy. Nope! I woke up in excruciating pain and terribly nauseous. Then, one of the tubes I was hooked up with came loose because I felt something wet on my back. When I turned…the sheets were covered in blood. I got hysterical and started

screaming. It took three nurses to calm me the fuck down. So, I was moved to a different bed and the pain went to a high that I pray I will never experience again. After two hours, the nurses were still having trouble getting the pain managed. They almost had me admitted into the hospital, but I managed to talk myself down from the ledge. I just wanted my own bed and my cat Nathan Edgar (Baby Natey).

This cancerversary brings mixed feelings that I will get into another time. I will say it felt good to write again since I have been on a hiatus for a few months. I definitely feel a much needed therapeutic release.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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