# Day 4,385 – Radiation Oncology Three-Month Follow-up

After radiation and hormone therapy for prostate cancer, I talk with my doctor about PSA numbers and side effects.

November 28, 2022 By Dan Zeller

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My somewhat premature three-month follow-up was Thursday, 10 November, and went about as expected. On the whole, he was pleased with where I'm at.

I reviewed several things with him.

First, we talked about my PSA being 0.05 ng/mL both in September and again in November. He was pleased with the number and didn't think there was any significance in the fact that the two numbers taken about six weeks apart were the same. He chalked the reading up to the hormone therapy and said that at this early stage, my PSA was "meaningless" in determining the effectiveness of the radiation. We'll have to see what it is a year or two down the road to determine that. No big surprise there.

He did say that I shouldn't panic if the PSA number starts to go up, as long as it isn't a huge leap or is increasing rapidly. He expected it may go up a bit and then stabilize and stay at a certain level as the hormone therapy wears off. Time will tell if he's right.

I mentioned that my urinary frequency was back to pre-zapping levels, with far fewer trips to the toilet in the middle of the night (0-3). The urgency was slightly elevated from my pre-zapping days, but is tolerable as long as I act on it.

The one concern that I really wanted to talk about—and is the one I feared the most about radiation—were bowel issues.

The week before I went on my mini-vacation to Kings Canyon National Park, something was afoot in my bowels. I was having three to five bowel movements a day for about four days when I normally get by with one. I was thinking, "Oh, crap! Is this from the radiation??" I was concerned enough that I almost canceled my trip, but when things calmed down the weekend before, I decided to go ahead.

In the last two weeks or so, I've been suffering from what I call IBH—Itchy Butt Hole. (The nurse doing the prescreen interview cracked up when I told her that.) I also seem to be gassier than

usual, and my diet hasn't changed to cause an increase in gas production.

The doctor was a bit puzzled by this development, suggesting that the radiation may have irritated hemorrhoids and that a topical cream may help resolve the IBH. He was stumped by the increased gas and suggested that, if it persists, I talk to a GI doctor. He did say, however, if radiation had damaged my bowels, it would be more substantial than what I'm experiencing, so that was good to hear. Even though, I'm going to track this closely to see if things continue to worsen.

In the end, the radiation oncologist was quite pleased with where I'm at. We'll follow-up in six months.

I have an appointment with the urologist on 13 December 2022, so we'll see what he has to say and map out a PSA testing schedule.

Be well!

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