# Jon Barr — Here Be Barr on YouTube

Jon Barr shared his experience with testicular cancer on YouTube — it's been viewed over 36k times!

January 15, 2019 By Justin Birckbichler

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Welcome to the Band of Ballers! In this series on ABSOT, I'm turning over control to some other ballsy testicular cancer survivors and patients who have inspired me with their work in advocacy and awareness during and after their diagnosis. This month's feature is all about Jon Barr, a travel vlogger, who shared his testicular cancer journey on YouTube. Enjoy!

I was on top of the world and living in Mexico. It was mid-April of 2017 and I had spent over a month in the largest city in the Western Hemisphere, living with my girlfriend and making travel vlogs for my growing YouTube audience.

It's amazing how one day can completely change your life

I had just finished filming a vlog about my experience volunteering at a school for the blind in the Condesa neighborhood of the city. I was voicing my outro clip on camera, and right as I completed what I wanted to say, I felt a sharp pain shoot up from the right side of my groin to my lower abdomen.

I even captured that moment on camera, which you can watch on the video below that I made about my testicular cancer ordeal, around the 1:04 mark.

It hurt so much, I had to sit down on a nearby chair. My first instinct was, this was from squatting to much at the gym that afternoon. I told my girlfriend and I noticed how concerned she was from the get-go — maybe it was the female instinct. I convinced her that I was fine, and that I would get home, lay down and it would go away.

We returned to our apartment about 15 minutes later, and I went to lie down. I had planned a video shoot the next day at some Mexican pyramids. I didn't want anything to stop me from joining this shoot. I got back up one hour later and the pain was still there. My girlfriend insisted that I go to the hospital to see a doctor. I later learned that she had an ex-boyfriend who died of testicular cancer 10 years earlier, and any symptom of this nature was an automatic alarm for her.

Even though I didn't know about her past with testicular cancer, I still agreed to go to see a doctor

We walked to a private hospital a few blocks from our Airbnb. First, a general doctor came to see

me and asked about my symptoms. He felt around and concluded that I potentially had a hernia from lifting too heavy at the gym. While I wasn't thrilled with his prediction (I had a hernia years earlier as a child), I was willing to accept it. To prove his hypothesis, I had to go upstairs for an ultrasound. I later learned that this scan was critical. While his initial diagnosis was wrong, it did lead to them finding what came next.

I laid on a cold metal table on the second floor of a Mexico City hospital and met with a technician, who luckily spoke fluent English. He applied the ultrasound wand to my groin, which was not exactly a pleasant experience. As I waited for him to find the "hernia," I saw his eyes widen. He said, "This isn't normal… I found something else." I replied, "What is it?" He exclaimed, "You see this, right there? That's a tumor."

The words stung, I was in complete shock. I felt like I just got blindsided by a truck. I was speechless. He explained he would have to call in a urologist. The rest of the night at the hospital was a bit of a blur. The urologist explained what would likely come next: I would need blood work, a CT scan to see if the likely cancer spread and I had to make a decision if I wanted treatment in Mexico or the United States. The decision was easy, and I flew home to NYC the next afternoon.

Back in New York City, my testicular cancer journey moved along swiftly

The doctors at NYU's Langone Medical Center got me in the day after my flight arrived. A second ultrasound was done, confirming the tumor, and I did blood work, chest x-rays and a CT scan that afternoon.

The hardest part of any medical situation is not knowing. The days I waited for the results of my blood work and CT scan to see if cancer spread to other parts of my body was the most agonizing of my life. By the end of that weekend, I decided I was ready for whatever came my way, good or bad and that I would take it one step at a time.

My doctor called on Monday and asked me to get out a pen and paper. I was locked in for the news. The bloodwork was okay, and the CT scan showed no spread. It was the best news someone in my situation could receive.

I still had one final hurdle — surgery to remove the tumor, along with my right testicle

That Friday, I went to NYU for the first surgery of my adult life and it went smoothly. There was one last bit of information I needed, the results of the biopsy to find out what kind of tumor it was, and if I would need radiation or chemotherapy.

I was walking on a Monday afternoon around the West Village of Manhattan. My phone rang, I recognized the area code, and it was my doctor. He said, "I have your results. Good news. It's a seminoma, the slowest moving of the cancers. We see no reason to treat you any further. We'll put you on active surveillance for the next few years, but the odds are you'll never need anything else done to you."

Again, it was one of the best case scenarios, outside of the small percentage of men who have a

benign tumor. While I wasn't thrilled because I was still at a small risk of a recurrence, this good news was cause for celebration. I kissed my girlfriend, and went home to drink a Brooklyn Lager beer. I still remember the brand for some reason… Beer never tasted so refreshing.

Fast forward a year and a half, and I'm still cancer-free

With my role as a YouTube creator, I have made a few videos about my experience, including the one above that has over 36,000 views. My videos encourage men to take care of themselves and listen to their bodies. (Editor's Note: He should connect with fellow Band of Baller alumn Kyle Smith of Check15. These two Uniballers could grab the attention of YouTube by storm!)

If my girlfriend hadn't pushed me to go to the hospital, the cancer could have spread by the time I caught it. Before, I didn't check myself in the shower monthly, but now I am a keen advocate for early detection. I was a 31-year old healthy young man who went to the gym. Cancer can affect anyone, and testicular cancer is the most common one for young men. It's very treatable, but you need to be vigilant to catch it early before complications can you cost you time, money, and even your life.

Be sure to connect with Jon by visiting him on Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Until next time, Carpe Scrotiem!

Know someone (or even yourself!) who is supporting TC awareness and would be willing to share their story? Drop their name, contact, and why they should be featured into this Google Form and I'll reach out to them and/or you!

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