Life After Radical Prostatectomy: 9 Years Later

So it's been 9 years since my radical prostatectomy on 4 January 2011. How am I doing?

January 4, 2020 By Dan Zeller

Status

If you've been following along, you know that my PSA has taken a bit of a roller coaster ride over the last few test results, with the trend continuing upward with the last reading at 0.16 ng/ml. I've got my next blood draw on the calendar on 4 February 2020 and we'll just have to see what happens next.

Emotions

Faithful readers of this blog will have noticed that I skipped my regularly scheduled post in December. Part of the reason behind that was I was insanely busy at work, trying to get almost 300 volunteers to staff five events in less than two weeks, and part of it was that I had been pretty successful putting this cancer crap on the back burner for a while, and it felt good.

I don't necessarily subscribe to the "ignorance is bliss" theory of life, but I think that I've been on a subconscious break for a while knowing that the next PSA test will very likely force my hand—enjoying the calm before the storm, so to speak.

Incontinence/Urinary Control

I've been pretty much maintaining the status quo in this department for a while now: minor stress incontinence that's more a nuisance than anything else. Although, when I was down with the flu in November, I was going through three or four pads a day with the severe coughing that I had. It wasn't fun. (Always good to have a supply of pads in the cupboard.)

There were also a few nights in November and December where I had to empty my bladder 3-5 times in 6 or 7 hours of trying to sleep. Not fun and made for a tough day afterwards. I'm not sure what that was about, as I didn't increase my fluid intake above normal any of those nights. Thankfully, I'm back to normal and can pretty much sleep through the whole night without needing to run to the toilet.

Sexual Function

The last time I wrote one of these updates, I said that I had been regressing a little in this department, with erections in the 60%-70% range. Things have seemed to improve a little on their own since then, and I'm probably back in the 70%-80% range, with an occasional 90% day.

Summary

I'll continue to enjoy the calm before the storm for now and we'll see what happens to my PSA in early February. If it goes up again, referrals to radiation oncologists and lots of imaging will likely be in my future. If it stays the same or decreases again, who knows what path I'll choose. No need to get ahead of myself right now. We'll get the results, talk to the medical team, and go from there.

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