

Prostate Cancer, Day 5,188 – A Wee Problem

A cough from a cold/flu can lead to incontinence, as prostate cancer blogger Dan Zeller is hesitant to share. Plus: California fires.

January 29, 2025 By [Dan Zeller](#)

I've been debating whether to write this post but figured that I've never shied away from sharing the gory details of the total prostate cancer experience. So if you don't want to read about my latest adventure with incontinence, you can check out the trip report of my trip to [Death Valley](#) last week.

In fact, the issue began as a result of my trip to Death Valley.

After four days of standing in the middle of the desert pretty much solo the entire time, I returned home Wednesday evening. Thursday morning, I ran off to the clinic for my PSA test (it took 7 minutes and 38 seconds from check-in to walking out the door). But by Thursday afternoon, I was feeling a bit wonky.

By Thursday night, I was down for the count with a full-blown head cold/flu. I was both baffled by how I contracted it, and annoyed that I had. It had been several years since I've had a cold or flu.

Unfortunately, one of the symptoms that hit me hard and caused the incontinence issues was a nagging tickle in the back of my throat that had me coughing pretty consistently and, in many cases, pretty intensely. It sucked.

It sucked because coughing is perhaps the greatest trigger for my stress incontinence. The harder I cough, the more I leak.

I wear Depend Shields in my daily life, and I can get by with one or two pads a day. But by the weekend, the coughing and resultant leaking exceeded their capacity. I had one coughing fit that had me fill the pad, overflow, and soak my jeans. Not fun. Through the weekend and into early this week, I was going through multiple pads a day and doing several loads of laundry.

I toyed with the idea of running to the store to get Depend Guards, the pads with more absorbency and capacity, but I didn't want to risk embarrassing myself in the middle of Aisle 12 at the grocery store. Plus, I was probably as contagious as Typhoid Mary, so that wouldn't have been a good thing, either.

I was taking some cold/flu medicine that helped reduce the cough—the root cause of my issue—and I just rode out the storm for a few more days. Today, a week after this all kicked in, I'm back to my good ol' self getting by with the occasional drip and dribble.

The lessons learned for me are to keep the cough medicine on hand to help reduce the root cause, and to keep a supply of Depend Guards on hand to do a better job of controlling the mess.

Now you know why I may have been hesitant to share this. But, hey, it's for educational purposes, right?

On a related note, I was successful in getting my appointment to review my PSA results moved to an earlier date. It's now 18 February 2025 (four weeks is better than four months). I'm okay with that.

Unless you've been living under a rock the last two weeks, you already know that southern California has been ablaze with wildfires. Luckily, up until this point, they have stayed clear of San Diego for the most part. Until today.

This little gem popped up about 6 miles / 10 km from my house this afternoon:

View of the Border Fire on Otay Mountain taken from the vacant lot down the street from my house. Courtesy of Dan Zeller

It's grown to about 600 acres / 240 hectares in about six hours, and we're expecting high Santa Ana winds this evening. It's in a very mountainous area, and air crews have been working the scene all afternoon. Luckily, it's adjacent to a large reservoir, so there's plenty of water for the

helicopters to access. We also have rain in the forecast for the weekend for the first time in months (San Diego has had the driest start to the wet season since they began keeping records in 1850. We've had only 0.14 inch / 3 mm of rain since 1 July 2024.)

Of course, I'm concerned and I've made preparations to leave if need be. But given the location, the fact that the reservoir is between me and the fire, and the prevailing winds are keeping the smoke south of me, I'm hopeful that my neighborhood will be unaffected.

I'll keep everyone updated over the next day or two.

Be well.

[This post](#) originally appeared January 23, 2025, on [Dan's Journey Through Prostate Cancer](#). It is republished with permission.

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