The Urologist

"So I am going to be straight with you. You have testicular cancer."

December 22, 2016 By Justin Birckbichler

All things really came to a head that day. My urologist appointment was scheduled for October 26 with Dr. Dumont. In the waiting room, I was easily the youngest person by a long shot. I peed in a cup (to this day, I'm still not sure why) and waited to see the doctor.

After the customary "drop your pants and let me examine you," the doctor looked me in the eye and said, "So I am going to be straight with you. You have cancer."

Wow. Even though I had been believing this since I first called, it was still vastly different to hear it from a doctor. Furthermore, I had only called for an initial visit eight days prior. I went from finding an area of concern to being a cancer patient in just over a week.

I did appreciate how straightforward and frank he was being with me.

He said based on his brief examination and the ultrasound, he was 99% certain that it was testicular cancer.

"Is this something I get a second opinion on?" I asked.

"In most cases, I tell my patients to get a second opinion. In your case, we don't have time," he replied.

The good news about testicular cancer is that it is very treatable. While 1 in 250 men will develop it, only 1 in 5,000 of them will die from it - roughly 1 in 300,00 of all men. On the whole, it has a 95% five-year survival rate. The bad news is that it is very aggressive. It can quickly spread to other parts of the body and become more complicated. Dr. Dumont said I had been smart and caught it early. Thank goodness I did catch it fast and called immediately. I had experienced no pain in my testicles, unlike Lance Armstrong who had felt pain and still put off getting it checked.

"So what's next?" I inquired.

"Surgery. We need to remove the mass immediately. We can probably get you in tomorrow."

Double wow. Not only had I upgraded to cancer patient, I was also further promoted to surgery patient. Honestly, it was a lot to process. I told him I couldn't commit to surgery tomorrow and needed some time to think. I also wanted to talk to Mallory because I had stupidly told her not to

come with me to the appointment. He totally understood, but reiterated I had to move fast.

I went home and talked to Mallory. Up until this point, I had tried to minimize what was going on because I didn't want to worry Mallory. As I have said, I didn't want to burden people and generally hold my emotions in. This is fine for when I am frustrated at work or something minor is bothering me, but not so much in this situation. The weekend before, Mallory knew all of the unanswered questions were bothering me, but I refused to open up because I am a man and society says men can't feel things. On the Sunday morning before my diagnosis, while I was waiting to hear back from the doctor's office, she had said some minor comment and I exploded. It wasn't the comment, but the culmination of everything to this point. Once I had calmed down enough, she admitted that she provoked me a bit to get me to open up. Sneaky, but effective. Moving forward, I knew I needed to be open with her, and as I told her about the surgery, I was, even though it was hard for both of us. Being open with others? That would have to wait.

At this point, I knew surgery was inevitable and necessary but it was still a lot to process. I cried during this time. I don't cry often. I can count on one hand the amount of times I've cried since I've lived in Virginia. It was a lot to handle quickly and it kind of build up.

After talking with Mallory (having decided to go forward with the surgery), I called back and the office was already closed because of course it was. The following morning, they called back and the surgery was scheduled. I would be going under to have the mass removed on Friday, October 28.

Now that I had more concrete information, it was time to let more people in.

Click here to read the next part of my story, in which I first share my cancer diagnosis with others.

On Thursdays, I am chronicling my journey from discovery to the beginning of chemotherapy. To read through my story up until this point, please click here.

This post originally appeared on A Ballsy Sense of Tumor. It is republished with permission.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/urologist