I've Been Waiting For This Day.

I wanted to do something special to remind myself of what I've accomplished and hold on to that feeling I had in my first MRI.

January 23, 2019 By Lindsay Norris

At the risk of sounding dramatic or cheesy, I said the words really quietly out loud to myself this morning after I woke up… just to see how it felt. "Two whole years cancer free." I smiled and teared up a little, but couldn't help but wonder if this milestone would live up to my big expectations. From the first visit with my oncologist where we discussed that "most" of the colorectal cancers of my type and stage recur within the first two years, I've had this date marked on my mental calendar. Sure there have been lots of milestones throughout the last few years- but this one has meant the most… and it feels good.

When I think about how I felt on the morning of surgery 2 years ago, I do truly remember being more excited and happy than nervous — I was just so ready to get the cancer out and march forward (plus I was super tired of pooping my pants all the time, thanks radiation). I haven't always felt so confident and positive along the way, but if I do say so myself, I think there were more good days than bad.

I've changed as a person since I was diagnosed, and today is the perfect day to do a little reflecting on what I've accomplished, and to also set some personal goals going forward.

Things I've improved on since diagnosis:

- Obsessing about the stats and "why" (as much)
- Giving control to my docs
- Talking about my feelings surrounding life with and after cancer
- Referring to myself a "survivor"
- Not comparing my situation/ cancer to that of my own patients or other survivors I've met

Things I can still improve on:

- Exercising more consistently and eating cleaner/ healthier
- Getting more involved in advocacy groups

- Being annoyed with long term side-effects of treatment
- Thinking about cancer/fear less
- Writing more to process emotions

Anxiety. I wanted to put this on both lists, ha! I'm no doubt a more baseline, generally anxious person since cancer entered my life. Things like big crowds, hectic schedules, how others feel about me, if someone doesn't respond to my call or text, busy days at work, and wondering if kids are safe (phew better stop there, my heart rate is jumping up a little) all bother me much more than they did before. But I've learned that not all anxiety is bad- it can be used as a motivator, to keep your priorities in check, and encourage you to make healthy adjustments to how you move through life. Anxiety and onco-anxiety (anxiety about cancer recurrence and symptoms) are very different feelings and I think I've done well with learning how to separate them in my mind… my onco-anxiety has definitely improved over time; however, I can say with certainty- it will never truly go away. It sneaks up around scan time or appointments, or if I have some ache/pain or cold (convincing myself they're surely cancer related)- but overall I do feel like I'm in control.

So far, this milestone has lived up to my expectations. I've had a permanent grin on my face as I walk around the Cancer Center that has given me this amazing gift. I feel big relief after checking in with my oncologist and surgeon yesterday, hearing they're both pleased with my recent scans and labs and are thrilled with where we're at right now. So much that I've graduated to YEARLY scans. Wow. What a mind-bender. Do I feel like I'm "out of the woods"? — heck no! I never will. But I couldn't be more grateful to make it to this day, and I'm going to soak it all in.

To mark my second cancer-free-iversary I wanted to do something special to remind myself of what I've accomplished and to hold on to that feeling I had in my first MRI (which feels so long ago) when I heard the song that turned my fear into confidence. For that full story, click here.

So I did this. I love how the tattoo turned out and will wear it proudly. My little bit of sunshine, wherever I go, wherever this crazy life takes me.

This post originally appeared on Here Comes the Sun. It is republished with permission.

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