Zapping Session #1 — Done!

I uncover a surprising insight after my first session of salvage radiation therapy to treat prostate cancer.

July 21, 2022 By Dan Zeller

Just a quick post-zapping session post…

My appointment was at 9:45 a.m. and I arrived at the facility at 9:30 a.m. and met a friend who was there to provide a distraction and moral support—it was great to have him there.

I checked in and had about a ten minute wait before I was called back to the zapping room. There, the technicians explained what was going to happen and had me lie down on the table. We had a little challenge getting me lined up initially. I'm 6′ 1″ / 185.5 cm tall, and all of my height is from my waist up, so I had to scoot up on the table to get aligned.

They told me to wear gym shorts or sweat pants—something easy to pull down without metal (i.e., zippers) or items in my pocket. They put a sheet over my private parts, had me pull down my shorts to mid-thigh, and lined the lasers up on my new tattoos.

After that, they went into the control room and slid me into the machine. I stayed there for a good five minutes or so as they evaluated the fullness of my bladder (just right) and my positioning. They adjusted the table a few millimeters, all under the radiation oncologists supervision, and he gave them the green light to zap away.

The head of the machine rotates around the table, first in one direction and then in the opposite direction, buzzing as its delivering the radiation. That lasted probably around 5-8 minutes or so. It's not like being in an MRI or CT scan tube at all. No need to feel claustrophobic.

As soon as they were done, they moved the table back to the start position, I got up, and walked out and hit the nearest toilet to empty my bladder. Easy-peasy. All totaled, including the drive there and back, I was gone about an hour.

The only surprise that I had was the paper copy of my zapping schedule that they handed to me. They have me scheduled for 39 sessions instead of the 35 that I thought we were doing. That has me ending on 30 August 2022. No biggie, I guess.

Lastly, they gave me a little ID card with a barcode on it and I simply scan it to check in for all my future zapping sessions.

I'll have to admit that, a few days ago, I wasn't all that emotionally worked up about this, and even this morning I thought I was pretty okay. But I can tell now just from the tension releasing from my body right now, I was far more worked up than I thought I was. The subconscious can do some weird things.

Going forward, I'll probably not post about this after every session, but only when there are noteworthy things to report (like shorting out a multi-million dollar machine if I pee all over it or if/when the side effects start kicking in).

I need a nap. Or a beer.

Be well!

This post originally appeared on Dan's Journey Through Prostate Cancer on July 7, 2022. It is republished with permission.

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