Zapping Session #21 — Week Update

A new bladder trick to help me prep for the salvage radiation therapy that's treating my prostate cancer!

August 15, 2022 By Dan Zeller

This morning's Zapping Session #21 was canceled because of equipment issues—a make-up session will be added at the end—but the rest of this week's zapping sessions were quite routine across the board, with a minor issue on Monday.

In addition to having to have a full bladder, you also have to have an empty rectum. Despite having had a bowel movement just prior to the session, the CT scan revealed a little stool left behind. That concerned the technicians, so they called the radiation oncologist over to see if they could proceed with the zapping. He gave the green light after evaluating the size and positioning and we completed the session as usual. That was a first. Glad to see that the imaging safeguard in place is working.

I had a different set of technicians zapping me this week, and the one seemed to be a bit more persnickety about my bladder status, which I appreciate. She gave me some updated guidance on how to make sure my bladder was full. In essence, she said to make sure to drink water throughout the day so that my body is hydrated (especially in our warmer weather). Otherwise, if I'm not hydrated, when I drink the liter of water in the morning, it gets diverted to where it's needed in the body first rather than to the bladder. Makes sense.

Based on that, I've actually started drinking water after each time I empty my bladder—even in the middle of the night—and that seems to have helped keep me closer to a full bladder (after only one day of using this method).

Yesterday's session was the fastest yet: 23 minutes from leaving my house to being back in my house. The patient who's normally ahead of me on the schedule was done, and not more than a few minutes after I checked in, I was on the table getting scanned for positioning.

That really makes me appreciate the fact that I am able to use this facility and not the other one offered up. The other facility is 18 miles / 29 km from home and, depending on the time of day and traffic, it could take 35 to 60 minutes to get to, plus there could be delays at the entrance gate to the military base the hospital is located on. Managing bladder timing under those circumstances would have been a nightmare.

On a positive note, my fatigue has been noticeably less this week than last, and that's a good

thing. That just means that I have more energy to run to the toilet more frequently. The frequency is a bit annoying and even limiting.

I find that it’s a little challenging to go out and play immediately after the zapping session unless I could guarantee that a toilet is available on relatively short notice. After surging my system with water in the morning, I find that I’m emptying my bladder three or four times in the first two hours or so after the session ends. Once that water is purged from my system, I get back onto a more normal schedule of emptying my bladder every two hours or so, give or take.

Now, it’s off to the barber shop without fear of having to bust out of the chair and run to the toilet. I hope.

Enjoy the weekend and be well!

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