

Ray Turner:

For about 10 years I was taking Flomax because of an enlarged prostate. Even with the pills that are designed to increase the urine flow, I was still getting up 4-5 times a night to go to the bathroom. Tired of this routine I found a new procedure while searching the web. It's called Green Light Laser. My research revealed that the procedure would enlarge the urethra and should drastically reduce the number of times I would have to get up during the night. Also, the procedure was covered by OHIP. My doctor recommended an oncologist in Newmarket who he knew, had the necessary equipment and had the confidence in to correctly perform the operation. I booked an appointment, and to make a long story short, I booked the operation. The oncologist insisted that I have a biopsy, and after ensuring me that the odds of finding anything unusual were 99.9 to 1 in my favour I had the biopsy. He took an ultrasound of the prostate at the same time and advised me that I had a "grapefruit" for a prostate, not the normal walnut size. My reading was 220CC vs a normal 35-40CC. We booked a follow-up appointment to review the results and finalize the procedure. I got the results of the biopsy, at 5:30 p.m. on Feb 1, 2005.

This was when I was advised that I had prostate cancer.

What a surprise

What a shock!

I remembered being told I had a Gleason of 6 but everything else was a blur.

The oncologist had mentioned Man to Man as a support group I could contact if I wanted some information about my cancer and gave me a few websites to visit. Needless to say I was scared, upset, embarrassed, secretive and totally confused about what to do. To add to my misery my family physician ordered a bone scan and a CAT scan. Both came back positive suggesting that not only did I have cancer but that it had metastasized to my pelvic bone area and to my adrenal gland.

I had to have 2 sets of x-rays before the experts were sure that my cancer had not metastasized to my pelvic bones, and I ended up having 3 CAT scans before they were sure the blur on my adrenal glands was not metastasized prostate cancer.

I was not in good shape when I went to the Man to Man meeting on February 15. I was not prepared for what I saw. When I went into the meeting I found about 30 guys who were laughing and having a good time. How could this be? They supposedly all had prostate cancer and I had found nothing funny to laugh about. Needless to say I learned that prostate cancer can be conquered and I had 30 guys around as living proof. It was at this meeting I learned names of Doctors that had had success with some of the guys. Dr. Klotz at Sunnybrook and Dr. Trachtenberg at PMH were two names I wrote down and later that week made arrangements with my family doctor to have my case referred to them.

Surprise! I had two appointments two weeks later.

My first oncologist recommended surgery to remove the prostate advising me that since my prostate was so big it was unlikely I was a candidate for anything else. Dr. Klotz and his intern reviewed my files and did their own exams (the most thorough Digital Rectal Examination I ever had.

I am sure it must have lasted over 60 seconds) and their advice was to wait and enter his active surveillance programme.

I would have a PSA test every 3 months and if the readings started to rise dramatically I would then be a candidate for further treatments. Dr. Trachtenberg recommended something totally different. Have surgery to remove the cancerous prostate but first go on hormones for 3 months before surgery in order to shrink the prostate into a more manageable size to make the surgery easier. To make a long story short I opted for the hormone treatment and surgery. Why? I wanted this cancer out of my body. A Gleason of 6 and a stage T1C strongly suggests that cancer is confined to the prostate and I wanted to get rid of the damn thing. I did not want to wait until it became a more aggressive

cancer and then have to have surgery or external beam radiation. I am in better health now than I will be a few years down the line. Also, Doctors are reluctant to operate on men who are over 75. Why wait and take a chance. I would be too ill, too old or too sick to be able to have further treatment. I was never a candidate for Brachytherapy because of the size of my prostate.

Not having any testosterone in your body is a strange feeling. I had the Lupron D shot on March 18 and started taking Casodex pills the following day. Within 10 days I began to notice some side effects. Firstly, the reason you don't miss having any sexual activities is that you never think about them. No testosterone means no sex, and no thoughts about sex. You don't miss it because you never think about it. Strange. Also, your emotions become much more open.

I was watching a rerun of Star Trek TNG and in this episode a central character dies. I started crying and did so for over 15 minutes. Also, when Jane Fonda was talking about the death of her father, I burst into tears. Most unusual.

I had the surgery on June 23, 2005. The good news was that Dr. Trachtenberg believed he removed all the cancer (which the biopsy report confirmed) and also, that the hormones had shrunk the prostate in half making the operation quite normal. Also, he was able to spare the nerves that control erections. A great report.

Two days later I was discharged from the hospital. I still had the catheter in me but went home cancer free. You would think that my problems were over. A successful surgery and no cancer is exactly what I wanted and what I received. Unfortunately that was not the case. I do not know how or why but I developed a case of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I felt closed in, and just had to get out of my house. Frequently I would have my partner drive me around so I could escape from the house. I felt panic attacks and when I had to come down to Toronto General to have my catheter removed I was in a panic just walking past the hospital. Also, I became claustrophobic and could not ride in an elevator by

myself. Fortunately, I was smart enough to understand that I needed some help and that there was some help available. Dr. Matthew at PMH helped me sort out my feelings and understand what was going on and why, and my family doctor was sensitive to my condition and prescribed some antidepressants for me to take.

This lasted for about 6 months, and now I feel great and look back over the past year thinking that it was not all that bad.

It sure was when I was going through all the scares that the diagnosis of cancer can create, but I was lucky to have great support from my partner, from Man to Man and from the staff at PMH. My story ends on a happy note.

Four PSA tests later I still have a PSA of less than 0.05 or in the words of PMH - undetectable.

Thank you.