



MIKE S.

My prostate cancer experience started when I was 56 years old. Up to that time in my life and still today I enjoy excellent health. I had been having yearly DRE and PSA testing done for more than 7-8 years at the time. I had noticed that I was having more frequent urinations, especially at night. When I talked to my family physician, we decided to wait a few months until my regular yearly physical. At that time the DRE did not tell us anything other than “normal and smooth.” When the PSA results came back, the reading was at 4.8. This is not a high reading for a man my age but my baseline reading had always been in the 1.8 range. My doctor insisted that I see a urologist to check this rise in PSA. The urologist recommended that I have a biopsy. I dreaded this test as I had heard such horror stories about it. To be honest the biopsy just wasn't that bad. I've had my teeth cleaned with a lot more discomfort than the biopsy. When the results came back from the test, the results were positive, with a Gleason score of 7 ( 4 & 3). It did appear that the cancer was contained within the Prostate gland. My urologist explained my options for treatment. Although he is a surgeon, he really wanted me to talk to a radiation oncologist. I did that and was fairly sure that a radical prostatectomy was what I wanted. You know the old thinking, cut it out and get rid of it and the problem is solved. On further consultation with my urologist, he once again explained to me that surgery was not my best option and that it was my choice what treatment I should have, but he highly recommended that I reconsider radiation. After talking with my companion and family about treatment, we decided that EBRT (external beam radiation therapy) was my best option. My urologist was pleased when I told him of my decision. I have to admit that if a surgeon is telling me that his treatment is not the best option, I really need to listen to him.

Before my treatment started I was given the choice or whether I wanted to go on a study program which had 2 sides to it. One side would be regular treatment involving the usual dose of radiation and 39 treatments, the other side was to have a higher dose and 45 treatments. I received the higher dose more treatment side.

The treatments went well. I had very few side effects. I did have some urgency in urination and also bowel movements but nothing that could not be controlled with a little bit of planning. As the treatments progressed, I did experience fatigue and a slight physical weakness. I was able to camp ( in a tent, mostly), ride my motorcycle and pretty much carry out a normal life.

At this time I have had my 2<sup>nd</sup> check-up and my PSA is down to under 1. My urgency in urination and bowel movements are the best they have ever been in my life. I rarely even get up at night anymore to relieve myself.

My whole experience with the Prostate Cancer Institute let me know that our health system works well. Diagnosis to treatment was less than 3 months. Any faster would have been too fast to absorb all that was going on.

All the medical people that I have, and especially the staff of the Tom Baker Cancer Clinic were exceptional in their expertise and their compassion. I did indeed feel at all times very well taken care of. The Prostate Cancer Institute, the staff and volunteers made my experience a healthy one. In fact the PCI was such a positive place for me to come to that now I volunteer on a weekly schedule to be in the resource center and share my experience. The willingness and confidentiality of the staff and volunteers is remarkable. All materials available are recommended and approved by the urologists at this facility. There is an overload of information out there, but all information in the resource center is good solid information.

As men in our society of "I don't want to talk about it because I feel uncomfortable about my situation" we all need to address this medical problem and share it with all those who will listen

Since my diagnosis, I tell all men I know or meet, "Get to your Doctor and get regular check-ups" and insist you start having the DRE and PSA testing done. Early diagnosis is our best chance of dealing with this disease and of course the sooner it is detected the better the chance of survival