

My Journey Part 2 – Bulletin No 3

Following my 2nd course of chemo I was more prepared to cope with the dramatic changes that occur and I was able to quickly adjust my diet to enable the body to function more normally. Breakfast to me is the most important meal of the day. There is nothing better than a yoghurt, a large bowl of porridge brown sugar, cream and milk followed by scrambled eggs. The perfect start to a day. During the day mashed bananas and cream are a delight, I also enjoy my Sustagen shakes, followed by mashed veges and gravy for dinner and dessert for dinner. I am also on a course of multi vitamins. I had no adverse effect this time around by following this daily diet. After 10 days on this diet I was then able to commence eating a normal sized dinner. For the first 10 days I was chemo Neil after that I was normal Neil.

After my 1st course of chemo and not being prepared for the effects that it caused I lost 4kgs in the 1st week, this time around I only lost 1kg. I felt so proud and relieved that I was able to conquer all of the issues that caused me concern following my first chemo experience.

The House of Happiness

Treatments in the chemo oncology ward effects patients in many different ways. My philosophy is to look upon it as a *house of happiness*, people may think what is the fellow on about. Yes, it is a house of happiness and it should always be viewed that way. As you enter the reception area the staff who log you in are always friendly and smiling and willing to share a joke with you, a great start. After proceeding to the waiting room you are surrounded by a variety of patients who appear to not want to greet you with a friendly smile, so be it.

The happiness starts again when a friendly nurse calls your name and you are shown to a bay you are to occupy for the next six hours of sitting is a very comfortable chair as your body absorbs the chemo. I always say to the nurse *how is the house of happiness going today*, a great way to start a conversation. There are six bays of four chemo patients and mostly throughout the day they are fully occupied. Each bay has two nurses who administer and monitor the four patients receiving chemo.

These nurses possess very special qualities and many have been in the ward for several years as this is the job that they love doing. Yes chemo nurses are very professional, efficient, hard working and have a very special personality of being able to bring an atmosphere of happiness to the ward. Between their busy schedule they are always only too happy to chat and share a joke with the patients who want to engage with them. Yes I am of those patients who loves to have a chat and a joke. For my session I have have six bags of chemo so they spend a lot time with me and we get to know a lot about each other. There is is no better way to wile away the time. To the nurses in the ward I love being with you and look forward to each visit to the house of happiness.

Friday 6 March

I had a CT scan which will enable my chemo oncologist Dr Marcin to determine whether the two tumours in my neck had shrunk as hoped with the two sessions of chemo.

Monday 9 March

Crunch day appointment with Dr Marcin for the results of the CT scan which are crucial in determining the next course of action in my ongoing treatment.

Verdict

There has been no shrinkage in the size of the larger tumour, good news it has not increased in size either. Dr Marcin will not be proceeding with anymore chemo and I am awaiting an appointment with Dr Eric Khoo, my radio oncologist. Sadly I say farewell to the staff of the chemo ward and look forward to once again to catching up the radiotherapy staff.

Always Look on the Bright Side of Life

Neil Raward

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