

Prostate Cancer 101
February 2021
(First in a monthly series)

Like most of the largest lessons in my life I've learned this from experience, not what I read in a book.

I was diagnosed with Stage IIIC prostate cancer on December 11, 2020, which was a huge shock, my PSA was only 8.4. I had been told by two doctors that as a man ages his PSA naturally goes up and for someone my age, 70, a PSA of 6 or maybe even 7 is not horrible. I've learned a lot since then....

I pushed for a biopsy because my PSA was rising, not that it was a high number. I've known guys with a PSA of 65. In 3 years, my PSA went from 1.98 to 8.11. What I believe now is the critical issue is not the number, but the amount of change over a short period of time. It went up 2 points in one year and 2 points the next year.

Another thing I've learned is if you have 2 labs do a blood draw to determine PSA, there can easily be a difference of 3 points. So again, it is not just the number, it's the change over a period of time.

My urologist assembled a team of experts in prostate cancer which includes an oncologist, and in my case since the cancer is high risk to spread, we chose radiation and hormone therapy, so I have a radiologist, a physicist, and a dosimetrist on my team. In addition, I have 3 awesome radiation techs who are top drawer and make you feel as comfortable as you can be.

Given my level of cancer the protocol I am on for treatment cures 75% of those who take it. My intent is to be in that percentile. I am doing my part to be at the clinic every day at 3:15 pm for my daily 15 minutes of fame, for the 45 weekdays of treatment.

If you are concerned about prostate cancer, please take action.

I am not a doctor, but my advice is if you are over 60, get the PSA test annually, log it and pay attention to changes. If you get to the biopsy stage it is uncomfortable for a week or two, but much less uncomfortable than being dead.

As my story unfolds, I will continue to share it because one of my biggest sources of stress after being diagnosed was the fear of the unknown. I had no idea what to expect from any phase of the treatment. If I can share my experiences, I am hoping some guy out there might take positive steps because the process is not to be feared. There are a number of interesting steps along the way, but I am vertical, taking nourishment and plan to be for another 10 or 30 years.

Next month will be Prostate Cancer 102

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