

My Story

**I never thought it could happen to me.
I was under age 40 and healthy... or so I thought.**

I had some blood in my stool, but just blew it off. A week later I was talking to someone at work that had the same experience and was found to have a polyp. That is when I decided to go get it checked out. The procedure that I had done was a colonoscopy. The doctor removed a polyp that was the size of a golf ball. They sent it off for testing which is procedure. I got the call that it was malignant and I needed to find a surgeon. At that point it really hit home hard and I thought somehow I caused this to happen. After some time spent in prayer and talking with others in prayer, I knew I was going to need the Lord's help. So I went to be prayed for by the Elders in the church claiming God's healing "Jehovah Rapha" with a positive attitude.

There is a lot of fear when you hear the words "YOU HAVE CANCER" and it is the second leading killer in the U.S. You tend to think that you are going to die.

My doctor discussed my options and said "the earlier you catch it the better the odds." They had to remove three-fourths of my rectum. The cancer had not spread beyond that, they got it early enough. The surgery was a success. I did not have to have chemo or radiation. The recovery time took longer than I anticipated. My body doesn't heal quickly from surgery. I went into the hospital weighing 150 pounds, after the surgery and two weeks in the hospital I came out weighting 105 pounds.

I not only felt weak, but I also looked weak. I had to have help with everything because I didn't have the strength to do it myself. The simple little things like standing and walking were a struggle. I had to start out walking from the bed to the couch and that wore me out. I slowly increased my steps by walking around the kitchen table. I still required assistance to keep my balance because my muscles were so weak. I was gradually able to regain my strength. Things like that are just as hard on your mind, heart, emotional well being as it is the physical. The help of the Lord, my wife, family and friends beside me made it easier.

I had my follow-up colonoscopy to make sure the cancer had not returned. I am still cancer free! I have remained cancer free!

The time that has passed since my cancer scare has been five years. Things were going great and then I started having issues with pain and discomfort that made sitting painful. The doctors were not sure at first what it was. I went through tests as well as IV antibiotics for a couple of weeks. That didn't fix it. By this time the sore area was worse but the doctor was able to determine that I had developed a fistula. I dealt with the fistula draining and the pain for a few months. The pain and discomfort continued to increase and the pain medicine wasn't working very well. I chose to have a diverting colostomy. The pain was so bad, I had to do something! My surgery was a success! I now had a stoma and an ostomy bag. Wow, that was different. I wasn't really comfortable with it at first. I felt different; however I was not in pain like I was before.

Once I recovered from my surgery and got used to having an ostomy, my life returned to normal. I am able to do all the things I did before.

I still water ski, snow ski, ride my motorcycle, I was even able to ride the camel in my church's Easter pageant. My ostomy does not stop me from living my life and doing what I love to do. I have had my ostomy for two years now. There have been struggles and it wasn't always easy, but if you take things one day at a time, it does get better and although I have my ostomy it does not control me. I praise God for Dr. Waller and his abilities! My doctor and his staff always answered any of my or my wife's questions, no matter how many times we called. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

I am still here I HAVE SURVIVIED!!!!!! My wife still loves me to!!!

Thank you for reading my story.

Rick