

“Once Upon A Time”

In 2006 at age 64, I was scheduled for my first colonoscopy.

I was a walking example of a person who never thought about a routine colonoscopy (at age 50 and up).

Diagnosis: two polyps... one easily removed for biopsy testing. The other in the sigmoid area, in a difficult position could not be removed.

Two more colonoscopies to try and reach and remove the polyp failed. The decision was made to have a colon resection to remove the polyp and my surgery was scheduled.

2007 – In January I prepared for surgery and an 8-9 day stay in the hospital. The surgery was successful and the polyp (tumor) was removed. The biopsy diagnosis was 1 centimeter of cancer in the tumor. Thankfully, the area near and around the tumor were also removed. No chemo or further treatment was necessary.

2009 – **During a follow up colonoscopy two more polyps were found.** They were removed. One showed signs of cancer and again, a colon resection was scheduled... with the expectation of another 8-9 day stay in the hospital. Only a small number of cancerous cells were found in the polyp. The tissue around the area was removed which again made chemo and further treatment unnecessary.

2010 – Another follow up colonoscopy, this time within a year of my last surgery. **Since the tumors formed within two years of the surgeries, it was deemed necessary that I return once a year for follow up tests.** I am also given a blood test (CEA) which is a colon cancer screen. It determines if any cancer cells are present in the blood stream.

So far, so good...

Personally, I would go as often as necessary for a colonoscopy... if it would keep the 2007-2009 events from recurring.

I am returning this year for my next colonoscopy. I will be faithful to these procedures and follow up exams for the rest of my life... and I will shout from the highest mountain to everyone... "GO GET YOUR COLONOSCOPY DONE!" It saved my life and could easily save yours too.

I began this story with the words, Once Upon A Time, which indicates a Fairy Tale... This indeed was No Fairy Tale, so I change the words now to "A Colonoscopy Saved My Life."

Thank you to Dr. Smith and his staff.

Sharon