

My Journey Part 2 – Bulletin No 2

Friday 24 January

Visited GCUH to have PICC line inserted to the inside upper left arm to allow for chemo to be circulated through body. This very precise procedure involved the use of ultra sound to find a suitable vein and x ray to ensure the line to fixed securely into the vein. Had a lot of fun with the two lovely nurses during the procedure.

Tuesday 28 January

As Monday was a public holiday I commenced my first session of chemo on on Tuesday. Up bright and early to be at chemo ward by 7.30am. Following preparation commenced first session of chemo which comprised of preparing body for main dose (3 chemo agents). In all 2 litres of agent where circulated through body comprising saline solution followed by infusion of magnesium and potassium, after which docetaxel and cisplatin were administered with whole the process being over a 6 hour period. Followed by fluorouracil which is administered by a pump through a PICC line over a 4 day period in which 3mls per hour are fed into the body. Left GCUH at 3pm and returned to await the unknown that lay ahead for me, Returned to GCUH to Saturday to have pump removed and change dressing on PICC line.

The Rigours of Chemotherapy

For the first few days I did not experience many changes apart from nausea and keeping my food down on the odd occasion although I certainly looked forward to my afternoon naps. I lost 3kgs weight during the first week as I adjusted to my new diet to combat the effects of the chemo. Into my 2nd week I was once again enjoying my food especially the ice cream and mango desserts with Sustagen playing a major role in ensuring that I was having sufficient nutrient in my diet. I intend living life as I had before by attending our monthly retired police meeting, an afternoon at the bridge club and chaired our Head and Neck Support Group meeting. Life has to go on and every effort must be made to ensure you don't let the chemo control your life, you have to be the person in control of the effects of chemo, no matter how hard it may seem during the journey.

Monday 10 February

Attended GCUH where I had blood tests then a visit to Dr Marcin Dzienis my chemo oncologist we are old mates as he attended to my every need during my radiotherapy/chemo program in 2016. Marcin was very happy with my blood tests as I went through with him my experiences with the first two weeks of life on chemo. The major issue for me was to adjust my diet to ensure that my food intake would balance the adverse effects of chemo. I am also looking forward to to once catching up with our dietitians and speech therapy professionals who are also joining me in my journey.

Observations

The third and final week of my of my first chemo program has seen my life nearly return to normal as I keep telling people that once again I am 95% Neil, although I still look forward to my rest periods as I wait to have the 2nd program of chemo on Monday 17 February. My wonderful partner Carole has ensured my every need is met through her extraordinary skill as my master chef, carer and provider of the comforts of home. My beautiful daughters Denise and Sue thank you for providing your wonderful back up to Carole when required.

I cannot speak highly enough of the support, encouragement and generosity of the members of the Gold Coast Bridge Club, they have been absolutely amazing and it is very comforting to know that these extended members of my family are travelling with me on my journey, together with my many other wonderful friends from my many walks of life. Thanks folks you make my journey easier knowing you are all with me all the way.

Always Look on the Bright Side of Life

Neil Raward

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