

Alice Marshall Story



In May, 2015, my daughter suggested I see a dermatologist about a spot on my forehead. It was diagnosed as pleomorphic t-cell lymphoma. My dermatologist sent me to a lymphoma oncologist at The University of Kansas Cancer Center because this was a rare cancer. My husband suggested I go there since it is a National Cancer Institute Hospital. I completed 15 rounds of radiation, and the lymphoma oncologist ordered a CT. Before I was 2 blocks away from that appointment, he called my cell phone saying I had a tumor in my colon. He asked when I had my last colonoscopy. I am a "rule follower", so I had mine done at age 50 with "all clear". Dr. Yacoub told me I would have my next colonoscopy before I turned 60.

I then started seeing a GI oncologist (Dr. Al-Rajabi) at KU Cancer Center. He sent me to a GI oncology surgeon (Dr. Al-Kasspooles) Dr. Al-Kasspooles laparoscopically removed a little over a foot of my colon and 39 lymph nodes. My colon had 2 tumors. The largest was golf ball size. 20 of my lymph nodes were cancerous. I did 6 months of chemo, but was not able to do all 12 rounds due to low blood counts and extreme difficulty with Oxaliplatin. CTs were every 3 months, and a spot in my lung that had been 0.4 cm grew to 0.9 cm 10 months after I had completed chemo.

I went to a KU thoracic surgeon who specializes in cancer. (Dr. Veeramachaneni) He removed the top lobe of my left lung & some lymph nodes. The pathology report found the spot to be colon cancer, and my lymph nodes were clear. I had the choice of doing chemo or not, and I chose to go with chemo for another 6 months. This time I did not do Oxaliplatin because my medical team feared it would kill me. My response to that was, "That kind of defeats the purpose of chemo." (Have to have a sense of humor with my team.)

On May 7, 2017, I had completed all 12 rounds of chemo, so I have had 20 rounds total of chemo when combining them all. CTs have been stable since June, 2018. Now I am No Evidence of Disease. My team will continue to keep an eye on me with annual visits and labs, and I will let them know if there are symptoms that need to be checked. Dr. Al-Rajabi told me I should have a normal life expectancy.

Both of my children have had colonoscopies because of my history. My husband's parents both died from colon cancer, so it is also on his side of the family. There has not been any colon cancer on my side of the family until now.

Now I am a Colon Cancer Ambassador for Fight Colorectal Cancer. I am extremely grateful for that spot in May, 2015, that probably helped to extend my life! Prayers, support, encouragement, and research have helped me with this challenge. I always end my social media cancer updates with Faith, Family, Friends, and Incredible Medical Team!