

I'm Thankful for Early Cancer Detection

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[Gogs Gagnon](#)



Even though I had no symptoms, my prostate cancer was caught thanks to frequent follow-ups with my doctor.

I cannot emphasize enough that there is nothing good about cancer. Nobody wants to face a cancer diagnosis of any kind. There are no "good cancers." All cancers can inflict painful and permanent damage on the body and mind.

Even if treatment is successful, there is no returning to "normal" as emotional and physical impacts remain for life. In addition, all cancers can be deadly as they can resurface years or even decades later.

Therefore, it's critical not to take our health for granted, especially as we age. People should not be embarrassed to discuss any health concerns with their doctor. Even more importantly, unusual symptoms should not be brushed off.

I know many men with terminal cancer who wish they had seen a doctor years earlier. Some of them ignored their symptoms, hoping things would improve on their own. Ideally, it's better to know about health issues before they become serious.

Even though it's true that early cancer detection doesn't guarantee survival, it's far better to detect sooner than later. In the case of prostate cancer, symptoms usually do not occur until the later stages. Therefore, cancer may have already spread outside the prostate by the time symptoms develop.

In my case, I had no notable symptoms, even though cancer was already in the final stage before breaching the prostate. Had I not bothered with regular checkups, I potentially wouldn't have known I had cancer until it was too late.

My regular checkups included the digital rectal examination (DRE) and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing. I've had several DREs over the years by different doctors, and they all reported that other than an enlarged prostate, which is typical as men age, it felt normal.

It was my rising PSA that was a concern. Without regular PSA testing, I wouldn't have known it was rising. I'm grateful my doctor recommended monitoring my PSA despite my [lack of symptoms](#).

After a negative prostate biopsy, my doctor ordered an MRI that revealed a significant anomaly outside the reach of the DRE. Another biopsy, this time targeting the abnormality, was positive.

I was healthy, fit, and had no symptoms, even though cancer was close to breaching the prostate. Regular checkups, including the PSA test, saved me from a potentially terminal diagnosis.

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The goal is to detect cancer early before it spreads and becomes terminal. Until there is a cure for all stages, early detection is our best hope for a successful treatment.

For prostate cancer, early detection offers the most options, including active surveillance, a process that involves monitoring cancer regularly through testing and imaging to detect any progression. Treatment can be delayed or indefinitely withheld if there are no signs of cancer advancement.

That's precisely the benefit and power of early cancer detection — to give you the most options to consider and ensure cancer doesn't advance undetected.

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