



Kelly Motz  
Ovarian Cancer

My name is Kelly Motz. Three years ago, at the age of 45, I was diagnosed with stage III-C ovarian cancer.

What a shock to my world; how could this be? I ate right, exercised, and was in the best physical shape of my life. And, I really wasn't "sick." I had been experiencing some indigestion and noticed a little bloating about my waist.

I had my annual physical four months prior to my cancer diagnosis and received the "all clear." My primary care physician thought I might have gall bladder problems or an ulcer. An ultrasound showed some ascites, which prompted a CT scan, which showed a large number of tumors throughout my abdomen.

I was referred to a gynecological oncologist for my debulking, staging surgery, and follow-up chemotherapy. Boy, was I blessed by that decision. Statistics show that survival rates are greatly improved when ovarian cancer patients are treated by a gynecologist.

In the following week, I became very sick - seven liters of ascites accumulated in my abdomen. I was rushed into emergency surgery. I was hospitalized for two weeks and started chemotherapy. It was a slow, uphill battle to become

strong again. I was blessed with a strong support system. I feel sad for those fighting this battle without one.

I had so much help from friends, family, and coworkers. I could not have made it without them. My husband has been my biggest champion. He's been by my side this entire time. He's always asking questions and making sure all my problems are addressed. He maintains a Web site to keep friends and family updated on my progress.

I was one of the fortunate ones with an early diagnosis. Many women complain for years before getting an accurate diagnosis. Currently, there is no early diagnostic test to check for ovarian cancer. Even the tumor marker test used is not a consistent tool for all women. There is a program where ovarian cancer patients speak to groups of medical students to help inform them of the warning signs. That demonstrates the need for awareness even among doctors.

Ovarian cancer has been called the "silent killer," as it was believed for a long time that there were no clear symptoms or warning signs. While they do exist, they are subtle, but persistent, and include things that every woman has from time to time; bloating, changes in bowel habits, frequent urination, indigestion, feeling of fullness, and pelvic pain. It's no surprise the majority of women are diagnosed at later stages. If diagnosed at an early stage, survival rates are much improved.

I'm coming up on my three-year "cancerversary," which is always a day we celebrate the joy of life. I think I've always been one to appreciate the small things that make living such a joy. In fact, joy has been my motto since this diagnosis.

I know people wish to encourage you with tales of their battles with cancer, but we're really not all the same. To most people, you get diagnosed, you have surgery, then chemo or maybe radiation, and then you either get better...or die.

You see, I'm living with cancer. I look healthy. However, I have my days when I get tired, and even have occasional trips to the emergency room due to complications from chemo. But, I try to feel, look, and act "normal"; whatever that is. Thus far, I've had 36 treatments. My longest period without chemo has been eight months.

I've become involved in several awareness and advocacy groups. I feel compelled to spread the word about ovarian cancer. I want to spend the rest of my time and energy helping in any way I can.

I know the statistics and they aren't pretty. They are more than statistics to me as I can put a face to them. I know how this disease works. That only makes me more thankful for every sunrise and every kiss from my little granddaughter - what joy!

I can sincerely say my cancer diagnosis has been both a curse and a blessing. It's helped me focus on what is most important in life and enjoy the good days all the more!