

Rhonda Deinert

I was first diagnosed with breast cancer in March of 1999. I was seeing my family PA for some allergy issues and mentioned to her a symptom that I was having. She told me that she didn't think it was anything, but I was close to the age where I should have a baseline mammogram anyway, so I followed through. I was 37 years old with no family history, so it really caught me off guard. I, along with my family and doctors, opted for a mastectomy on my right side. The cancer was caught early and my lymph nodes were clear, so no further treatment was necessary.

In May of 2005, as I was planning a trip to a family wedding, I went to see my doctor about removing a large mass on the back of my foot. When I went in for my pre-operation physical, I mentioned that I had some sharp pain on my lower left side. I was told that as long as I was having anesthesia to remove the mass from my foot, with my history, I should have a colonoscopy at the same time. Again, I was called into the surgeon's office. The mass on my foot was benign, but they did find a cancerous polyp. I had a colon resection to remove the polyp, but again was so lucky to have an early diagnosis and no further treatment was needed.

My doctor told me the two cancers were unrelated, but instructed me to stay vigilant and keep getting those annual checkups.

In the fall of 2010, I went in for my annual mammogram. This time, cancer was found on the left side. After a biopsy confirming the diagnosis, I opted for mastectomy of the left side with full reconstruction.

There are three main things that helped me get through this:

- My Faith
- Listening to my body and having people in the medical profession that I trusted and felt comfortable enough to discuss my symptoms.
- The amazing support of my family and friends.