

Dave Christenson



My journey with cancer started March 3, 2008. I went in for what was supposed to be a simple health care procedure and woke up in the recovery room being told that I had colorectal cancer. It's probably one of the scariest moments of my life. There was a period of disbelief, fear, and confusion. My son Lee, an oncology nurse, was very instrumental in helping me find an oncologist and a surgeon. My wife Barb, son Lars, and family provided lots of support.

The tests started with bloodwork, X-rays, CAT scans, PET scans, and 3 colonoscopies in 4 weeks. The oncologist recommended radiation and chemotherapy before surgery. I had 29 sessions of chemotherapy and radiation. I received treatment right here in Mitchell at the Avera Queen of Peace Cancer Center. I can't say enough about the care and compassion I received from all the staff there. I had surgery June 26, 2008, 6 weeks after treatment. A secondary infection complicated matters and slowed recovery to 6 months.

The treatment and surgery were tough, but worth it. I am riding my motorcycle, hunting, fishing, and enjoying life with my grandkids. I am thankful for my family, my church family, so many special friends, and a great community for the great care, love, and support I received. I am humbled to be part of the Heart and Sole Cancer Walk.

For those of you who have not had a colonoscopy, please get it done. If you think a colonoscopy is scary, try colon cancer. You might not be looking forward to it, but early detection for colon cancer saves lives!