

Joni Rasmussen



I was diagnosed with stage 2B ovarian cancer on April 19th, 2013 at the extremely rare age of 28. I have no family history or genetic mutations- my cancer was simply a fluke. After several months of extreme fatigue, stomach and abdomen cramping (similar to indigestion), and irregular menstruations, as well as infertility, I was suspected of having endometriosis and scheduled for a laparoscopic surgery. I didn't tell many people (not even my parents and I am STILL paying for that one!) as it was embarrassing and I was told the pain would be minimal. No one would know and we could probably FINALLY get pregnant! Surgery went long, REALLY long, and I suspected something went wrong almost immediately when I woke up. I was referred to the most amazing oncologist in Sioux Falls where we discussed my diagnosis and treatment plan. May 1st, I had a full hysterectomy and was released from the hospital on May 8th, which just happened to be, the first-ever World Ovarian Cancer Day. In June, I started on my 6 rounds of chemo (weekly for 18 weeks) and completed my treatment on October 21st, 2013. On October 29th, I was deemed free of disease.

Throughout the process, my husband, Josh, and my family were constantly there to support me. Josh ran out for ice cream in the middle of the night, rubbed my sore, achy muscles, and supported my decision for the full hysterectomy instead of the initially recommended fertility sparing surgery. We later found out that I made the right decision - my cancer was too progressed, and the chance of recurrence would have been quite high, had I kept my other ovary. My parents, siblings, and relatives were at every chemo and played cards with me to make the time there fun. I cannot say enough good things about my oncologist and his staff, as well as the doctors that referred me- they'll always have my love, respect, and friendship. Some might say a cancer diagnosis was the worst thing that happened to them- for me, it was a blessing. I've seen the strength and love in my husband, family, and friends. I have a clear vision for my life and all the excitement, mystery, and surprise that awaits.

My name is Joni Rasmussen and I am a survivor!!