

Teresa Gebel



Teresa Gebel, of Mitchell, had a routine mammogram done in September of 2015. A couple days later, along with her husband, they found themselves meeting with a breast cancer specialist/surgeon who did his best to prepare them for her cancer diagnosis. The mammogram had revealed multiple masses, deep into the breast, near the chest wall. A biopsy was performed on the multiple masses. On Sept. 28, she got the call. The one where your doctor says, "I'm so sorry, but all the masses are positive for cancer." She started a series of additional tests, MRI's, scans, blood draws, appointments with genetics counselor and plastic surgeon, etc. During all of this, her husband and her tried to reassure their son, who was just starting Middle School, that all the testing was normal.

On November 4, 2015, Teresa had surgery to excise the ugly rogue cells that had morphed into cancerous masses. She was diagnosed with Stage 2 multi focal invasive ductal carcinoma, (5 tumors), that had spread to her lymph nodes.

Complications developed after her mastectomies, which required more surgery to remove additional skin and tissue. Those complications also took some treatment options off the table. The Avera Center for Precision Oncology at Avera McKennan did a DNA analysis of her cancer, which indicated she was a candidate for genetically targeted chemotherapy. She proceeded with 6 weeks of radiation treatments, followed by 6 months of genetically targeted chemo. Additional surgeries will be required.

Teresa was supported by her husband, son, family, and by her Avera family, (co-workers, friends, and confidants) She could not imagine this journey without them.

Cancer screenings are not about "saving the ta-tas", they are about saving lives. Not all women diagnosed with breast cancer have a single tumor, nor does every person feel a lump, see a dimple, have discharge, etc. Yes, screenings are uncomfortable, and no screening is tool is perfect, but cancer does not discriminate. It doesn't care who you are, where you came from, what gender, age, or color you are, or, that you don't have time for this cruel disease.

A surreal life changing experience....she is relieved, angry, grateful, guilty, Blessed, anxious, and humbled. She is, a work in progress.