

January 2008, I went for my annual mammogram and got a call from my doctor saying something looked different compared to last years. I was sent for another mammogram along with an ultrasound then had a stereotactic biopsy. The biopsy came back negative but my surgeon wasn't comfortable with the results. She thought something wasn't quite right and wanted to do a left surgical biopsy. This was March 2008. I was training for the Danskin Women's Triathlon and Dr. C said it would be OK to wait until after the race, which was on Mother's Day. I did the race on May 11th and had surgery on may 12th. May 15th I got the call from Dr. C and was told those dreaded words...You have breast cancer. It was stage 1 invasive ductal carcinoma, 6 mm (very small) and the margins weren't clear so I would need another surgery. (the hi-light of the week...I had tickets for the Police concert on May 16th...perfect timing. Sting to the rescue!).

I was sent for more scans and tests. The MRI detected something on the right breast. The next surgery was June 4. My lymphnodes were checked on the left side and all clear! A few days later I was told I had DCIS in my right breast. My options were 1. bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction, no radiation and no chemo depending what was found during surgery or 2. lumpectomies with radiation treatment and possible future surgeries. I chose option 1. Like everyone else going through this, I had no idea what to expect. I didn't how I was supposed to think or feel. I knew I had to keep living. I spent time releasing stress in the gym. I don't know what I would have done if I did not have that to turn to.

When I debating what to do, my sister told me that "the decision is a no brainer...get rid of them, you can always get new ones!" I thought about what she said long and hard, I knew she was right...I chose to have a bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction. My surgery was scheduled for Monday, July 21, 2008. A decision I do not regret at all!

My sister and 12 year old nephew came down and helped me post surgery. They were just what the doctor ordered! My nephew was my comic relief which helped with recovery. He was so sweet and so helpful. They stayed for a week. I wish they could have stayed longer!! The morning they left I had my drains removed and got the call from my oncologist letting me know I did not need chemo! I'm glad that I was able to tell them that in person instead of over the phone!

I had to see my plastic surgeon every two weeks to fill the tissue expanders.The expanders were so uncomfortable and I was counting the days until they were removed. On November 5, 2008 I had my final surgery...tissue expanders removed and implants inserted.

This whole journey has been a tremendous roller coaster ride. I don't like roller coasters and knew I had to bring this one to a stop. I was devastated when I got the call from my doctor. Just over a month after my final surgery I turned 40. Since then, I've had a new burst of energy. I am using this energy to help raise awareness - breast cancer does happen to younger women and are SURVIVING!!

My friends, family and co-workers were extremely supportive throughout all of this. I was home from work for 4 weeks, my co-workers were wonderful. They sent me a card every week I was home. I've saved all of my cards and have kept a journal of this journey.

I am forever thankful and grateful for Dr. C. She went with her gut and because of that my cancer was caught early.