

Neil's Story

OK guys, this is my journey into what I thought would be hell..

In 2015 I had food poisoning coming back from Portugal. A lump appeared on my neck shortly after, and maybe a week later it disappeared, then 2 weeks later it appeared on my neck again but the opposite side. I got this checked out 2 weeks later. Dr Patel referred me to ENT straight away and this is where the journey started. Biopsies, MRI scans, blood tests, CT scans, Pet scans, more blood tests - it was endless but the torture on the way.

Then on the 13 January 2016 I had to go to Addenbrookes hospital to see my consultant, Mr Amen, where he told me that the biopsies came back unsuccessful. More scans followed and on the 16th January I was diagnosed with Head & Neck Cancer, stage 4. 'Gutted', was an understatement.

I had my surgery on the 9th February. Whilst waiting in J3 ward for my surgery I was very nervous - particularly as I have 3 children at home. Abigail then was 5, Samuel 7, and my eldest Katie 17. The surgery last for 7 hours, although I was out of hospital within 4 days! I had a lot of support, with wonderful friends visiting me, Peter Whitwell, Vete & Denise Klimczuk; the list was endless.

Afterwards I had to have a feeding peg fitted as I'd struggle to eat and drink. 3 weeks later I had my radiotherapy mask made, then on the 15th March my 1st radiotherapy session started. There were 30 in total. I was hospitalised in the middle of April as the chemotherapy didn't agree with me after five 5hr sessions. My mouth and throat were full of blisters and ulcers and my neck was black through burning of the radiotherapy. This wasn't treatment - this was torture, barbaric torture, but if it was going to mend me, let's get on with it...

Apart from my family there are just a few people that made me feel and alive, in a sense of a word: Vete Klimczuk, Mick Burch, Tony Palmer, Wayne Savidge, Michael Lakey, Peter Whitwell, Terry Austin and too many more to mention. Then, there's also a massive thank you to my family. 2019 it is now, and although I'm 4 stone lighter I feel wonderful.

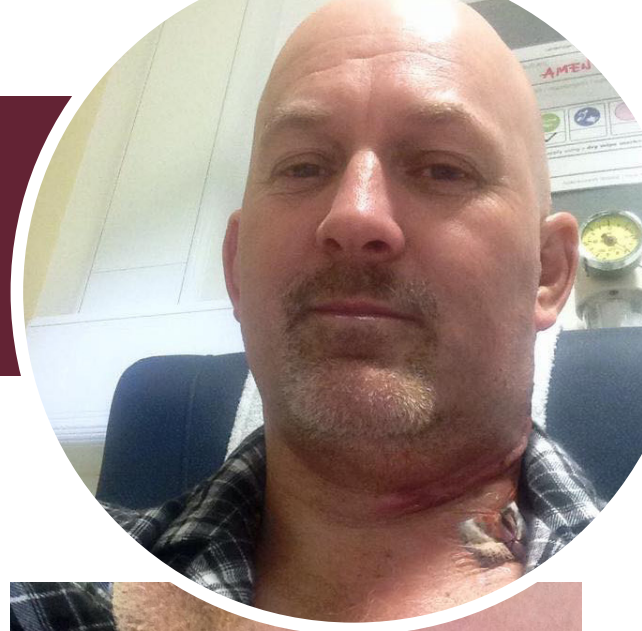
Thank you for reading about how I beat cancer.

Neil Rickett



The Swallows

Head & Neck Cancer Support Group
Registered Charity Number : 1149794



To read more patient stories or find out more about Head & Neck Cancer support visit:
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