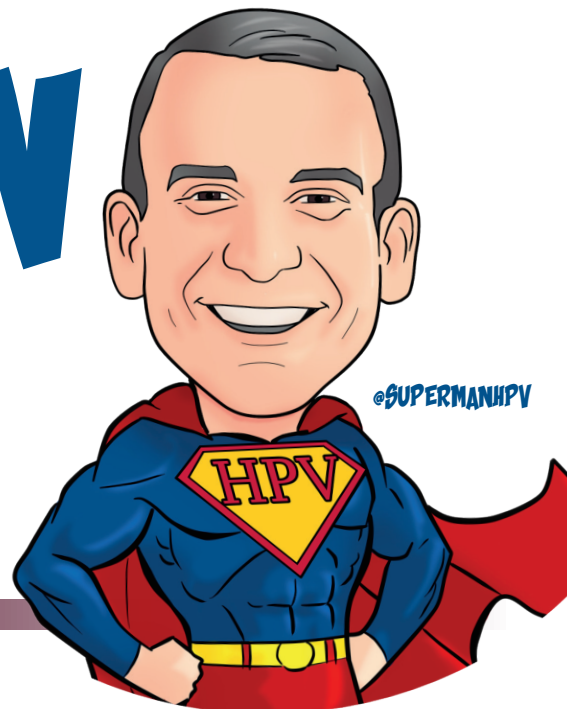


SUPERMAN HPV



My name is Jason Mendelsohn, and I am 50 years old. I have been happily married for 24 years, and we have three terrific kids; boy/girl twins that are 19, and a 13-year-old son. When I was 44, and in the best shape of my life, I put my hand on my neck to ponder a question while taking a financial exam and felt a bump.

After passing the test, I spoke to my father, who is a physician, and we called my otolaryngologist (ENT) concerned about the bump. My ENT, knowing that I didn't smoke and that I drink only socially, asked me to come see him over the next few weeks. I saw him three days later, as I am a guy that goes to the doctor. He put me on 10 days of antibiotics and steroids, while also having me schedule a needle biopsy and CT scan, in the slight chance the bump didn't go away. Two days later I left for the Florida Keys on vacation and then flew from there to Washington, D.C. for an industry conference. I felt great and enjoyed both trips.

I returned to Orlando from Washington, D.C. on a Wednesday, had a needle biopsy on Thursday and a CT scan the following day. Three days later, I was diagnosed with stage four HPV-related tonsil cancer. I was obviously in shock and immediately after speaking with my wife and father, contacted my two life insurance agents to make certain that my life insurance policies were on automatic draft.

Over the next month, I had a radical tonsillectomy, neck dissection – removing 42 lymph nodes

and began seven weeks of chemotherapy, radiation and a feeding tube.

Towards the end of my treatment, I had third degree burns in my throat due to the cumulative side effects of radiation, continued to feel nauseous from chemo, and spent approximately 18 hours a day in bed.



As I couldn't swallow my own saliva, I used my feeding tube to remain hydrated and nourished, consuming approximately seven Ensures a day and two Gatorades daily. My weight dropped from 188 to 172 in a few months. Sleeping was extremely difficult, because as I went to bed fully hydrated, I would wake up within a few hours fully dehydrated as the side effects from radiation were sucking the fluid from the inside out.



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JustGiving

This was the first time in my life that I had been dehydrated, without sweating, throwing up or having diarrhea. I would take my blood pressure/pulse 20 times a day to understand if I was becoming dehydrated, as my heart would beat much more quickly. Because my saliva was so thick from radiation, I would gag and choke close to 20 times daily, if not more. Life was unpleasant.



Outside of the physical challenges, there was an emotional toll as well. It was a horrible feeling to need my wife to shield my children from me, but I didn't want them to worry about me possibly passing away. I recorded personal messages to my kids in the event of my passing. Messages such as this one, "One day, you're going to get married, and I won't be there." I tried to impart years of fatherly wisdom in a matter of minutes because I didn't think I had much time left. I have since deleted those videos, as they were too sad to watch.

On August 11, 2014, I had my last treatment and rang the bell, demonstrating my treatment was finished. While I was elated the treatments were over and I had survived, I had no idea that the month to follow would be my most difficult. As I mentioned earlier, the side effects from radiation were cumulative, and the next 30 days were brutal, with all of the side effects I described above.

My story does however have an incredibly happy ending. Today, I am cancer free, and working diligently to serve as a positive role model to other oral cancer patients, survivors and families watching their loved one's struggle through the journey.

I feel incredibly fortunate that I have been given the gift of life, and that I can use my experience to help others.



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I continue to have annual checkups with my ENT and Radiation Oncologist. My life is back to my "new normal" where I can spend time with my wife and kids, work full time and do my best to help others by serving as an ambassador for education regarding oral cancer.

You can learn more about my cancer story by visiting SupermanHPV.com. This website and blog enables others diagnosed with HPV-related oral cancer, their families and fellow survivors to obtain information, ask questions, and hopefully are encouraged by my story to embrace their new normal.

I serve on the Executive Board of the Head & Neck Cancer Alliance (www.HeadandNeck.org), and spoke last year as a cancer survivor and patient advocate as part of a Congressional Briefing to increase HPV vaccination rates to eliminate HPV related cancers. Ultimately, my goal is to share my cancer story to positively educate and support other families impacted by HPV-related oral cancer.



Thank you,

Jason Mendelsohn

WWW.SUPERMANHPV.COM

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