



Go Grey in May

It's May, which means we celebrate not only Mother's Day but also **Brain Cancer Awareness Month**. This year, an estimated 23,820 adults (13,410 men and 10,410 women) in the United States will be diagnosed with primary cancerous tumors of the brain and spinal cord¹. If you are wanting to donate to find a cure you can go to braintumor.org or abc2.org. If you live in the Volusia County area there will be a Brain Cancer Awareness 5K on November 9th if you want to participate!

Informed & Insured



As some of you know my mother Billie lost her battle to *brain cancer* 7 years ago. My mother was a strong, passionate business woman who *didn't tolerate giving up* and was always optimistic. I believe that she was able to live a longer life due to that mentality and because of that I wanted to share what one could expect if their loved one were to be diagnosed with brain cancer. In return I ask that you provide support & empathy those & their loved ones in this situation.

Note: This is not a sad newsletter, I promise. Think of it more as tips on how to provide support. Also, I'm not a doctor so the steps may be different for other families.

Pre-diagnosis signs

- Loss of memory & repeating statements
- Limited vision
- Sleeping often

Depending on where the tumor is will determine what senses it affects.

Treatment 1 - Chemotherapy

- Conducted at home - 24-hour care needed due to the side effects
- Additional side effects: Anger, aggression, anxiety. Remember to stick together and be patient. Also, this is A LOT of stress for the care givers. The more family members involved to help, the better.

Chemo was not successful but we chose this route because the tumor was inside the brain rather than on the outside so it couldn't be removed. This was also not as harsh as radiation.

Treatment 2 - Stem cell transplant

- Conducted at the hospital for a few months - 24-hour care from family needed. Again, a lot of stress for the family. You must remember to stick together.
- Keep your loved one active. We used to take 2-4 walks a day around the floor to keep her endorphins up and legs working.

Treatment 3 - We had one more option, *radiation...*

- Neuropathy was setting in.
- Radiation, additional stress & medication made side effects worse.

Radiation is SO HARSH on the body, but it did help. There were signs that the tumor was diminishing, and our lives were getting back to normal.

¹ <https://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/brain-tumor/statistics>

A few months after radiation we were faced with the fact that the tumor had returned, and we were out of options. To attempt radiation again would entail a good chance that her mental state would *dramatically suffer* even more. Soon after, neuropathy had *fully set in* which forced us to get help from an assisted living facility, but we wanted to be there. With additional family support we were able stay with her 24/7. Hospice also provided great resources so she could come home until her final days. For some reason during those final weeks she had that sparkle back. It's amazing what love and support can do. For our family guilt has been the hardest road block, always "thinking back". If you can relate PLEASE know you are not alone and it's ok to ask for help.

How to help a family member going through treatment or their family.

- Keep them involved in day to day activity so they feel a sense of independence and not like a burden.
- Exercise!!! Even in the hospital, walk around and keep moving.
- Be positive – Energy is contagious!
- Be patient with them – They may move slower, forget things, get mad, etc. Just be patient and empathetic, seriously.
- Provide support to the family by chipping in, even if it's to walk to dog or drive their kids to school.
- Provide support to the family by being there to listen, don't compare just listen.
- Provide support to the family by helping to research resources. This takes a lot of time and can be a huge help.



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HAPPY
Mother's
DAY



2 <https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/mothers-day>

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MOTHERS DAY'S

ORIGINS

In the US the origins of Mother's Day goes back to the 19th century. In the years before the Civil War, Ann Reeves Jarvis helped start "Mothers' Day Work Clubs" to teach local women how to properly care for their children. Then the official Mother's Day holiday came around the 1900s from Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis. After her mother's death in 1905, Anna Jarvis conceived of Mother's Day as a way of honoring the sacrifices mothers made for their children. In 1914 President Woodrow Wilson signed a measure officially establishing the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day².