

Mother, wife....breast cancer survivor.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer at the end of February, 2008. We moved to Erie, Pennsylvania from Des Moines, Iowa in July of 2007, only seven months prior to my diagnosis. Originally, I had some discomfort in my left breast and felt a small lump. I had an ultrasound, mammogram, MRI, and then breast biopsy. I underwent breast conservation surgery at the Cleveland Clinic. The tumor was just over 1 cm, invasive ductal cell, grade II, node negative, ER+. My oncotyping was an intermediate score so the oncologist recommended chemotherapy, partly because I am only thirty-five years old. I underwent four cycles of Taxotere and Cytosin chemotherapy. Currently, I have started six weeks of radiation and then I will be on Tamoxifen for five years.

I continue to stay positive knowing it was caught early and prognostically one cannot hope for much better. I have always supported the Susan G. Komen foundation and breast cancer awareness despite the fact I have no family history, risk factors, or close family/friends with the disease; therefore I cannot help but to feel some predestination. I always believed if you have breasts, you are at risk. Regardless, it is an emotional rollercoaster and tests the soul. Fortunately, before my diagnosis I met a wonderful group of friends who helped me through this.

My hope is that other women going through this read my story and realize that they are not alone. I felt like I was the only thirty-five year old in Erie who had breast cancer. Meeting other women my age helped tremendously. I will continue to find support in these women and I know that we will continue to help.

Jennifer Brannen
Young Breast Cancer Survivor and "Linked By Pink" Partner
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