



KELOWNA PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT & AWARENESS GROUP

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VOLUME 27 – ISSUE 4 – (NUMBER 298) – DECEMBER 2024

Merry Christmas

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group celebrated their 28th Anniversary at our meeting in November, we had close to 50 people in attendance at the meeting. It was Saturday November 9, 1996, that with a little help from an employee with the Canadian Cancer Society in Kelowna I facilitated our first meeting in Kelowna. We have continued to have our meetings on the second Saturday of the month ever since.

Our guest speaker for this meeting was Dr. David Goldberg a local family physician and author of a couple of Joke books including ‘Jokes You’ll Love to Tell – A Prescription for Laughter’ with the proceeds from the sale of this book going to Prostate Cancer Canada.

Dr. Goldberg told those in attendance about his recent diagnosis and treatment for prostate cancer, told a few jokes from his book and took questions from those in attendance.

Yvonne and I would like to take this opportunity to wish all those in the Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group, as well as all those who receive this Newsletter a *Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

Prostate cancer diagnosis missed by GP after PSA test, but caught during visit for a ‘crook tooth’

The following information was obtained off the Internet and is a story of an Australian man’s journey with prostate cancer. By Alana Calvert Oct. 14, 2024

It was an ordinary trip to the doctor for antibiotics to treat a ‘crook tooth’ that led Craig Pankhurst being told he has six months to live.

Eight months earlier the 50-year-old had gone to his doctor for his routine prostate-specific (PSA) test.

He did not hear anything more and assumed that meant he was in the clear for another year.

But Mr. Pankhurst learnt how wrong he was when the removal of a wisdom tooth prompted a visit to the same medical clinic, and he saw a different GP.

That doctor had “spun around in his chair” to look at Mr. Pankhurst when he saw his PSA result from 8 months earlier.

“It ended up [being] nearly [a] Gleason [score of] nine – so close to a Gleason nine and that’s bad,” Mr. Pankhurst said.

Mr. Pankhurst had been diligent with getting regularly tested for prostate due to his family history.

The highest Gleason Score is 10, meaning Mr. Pankhurst’s cancer was already considered “very aggressive”.

“I don’t even know whether anybody checked it,” Mr. Pankhurst said.

The Alice Springs man was promptly sent to the nearest available specialist, 16 hours away in Adelaide, where the urologist didn’t mince his words.

“He blankly just said ‘mate, if this has gone where I think it’s gone, in six months you won’t be with us,” Mr. Pankhurst recalled.

“He said’ just prepare yourself, we think you might be in a bit of trouble.”

With his wife of nearly 25 years, Mr. Pankhurst had driven back to Alice

Springs mulling over this and preparing for the worst.

“Sixteen-hundred kilometers is a long drive with that hanging over your head,” he said.

Five days later, which felt “more like two years” to Mr. Pankhurst and his family, they received a phone call with good news.

The cancer hadn’t spread, and they could get it out.

Now in remission, Mr. Pankhurst credits the GP “who knew his stuff”, and a lot of luck for his survival and recovery.

“We only just caught the bugger. Only just caught him. So pure chance meeting with a GP who knew his stuff and I was saved.” He said.

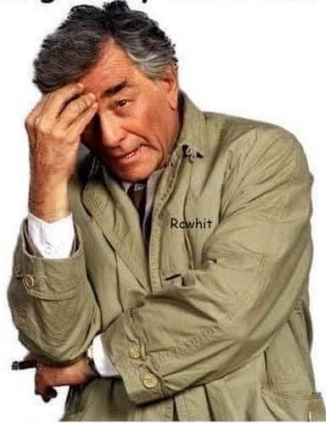
‘Don’t assume everything is OK’

Editor’s Note: For those of us in B.C. we can access something called “My Care Compass” (was previously called My E-Health) and you can get the results of your PSA blood test as well as other blood tests online. That way you will be able to track your own PSA.

Check with the lab for information and then when you sign up for My Care Compass you will need to put in your email address as well as a password. You will generally receive the results of the PSA or other blood work within the next couple of days. Print the results and then you can take the results with you when you go to your doctor’s appointment. Hopefully, you won’t go through any cracks in the system like Mr. Pankhurst.

WITT'S WIT (ON THE LIGHTER SIDE) -

So let me get this straight, I go to the grocery store and buy:



A pound of sliced ham in a plastic bag, a loaf of bread in a plastic bag, a gallon of milk in a plastic jug, a pack of napkins in plastic wrap, a store-made salad in a plastic tub, a plastic bottle of mustard and ketchup, but they won't give me a plastic bag to carry it home because the plastic bag is bad for the environment?

Stay Ahead of Prostate Cancer

The importance of Regular Screenings

Prostate cancer is one of the most prevalent cancers among men, with the American Cancer Society (ACS) estimating that approximately 288,300 men will be diagnosed with the disease this year. (The Canadian Cancer Society [CCS] estimates that approximately 27,900 Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year. That is up from 25,900 last year) Despite these alarming numbers, prostate cancer has one of the highest survival rates among all cancers. Its slow growth and the opportunity for early detection through routine screenings make a significant difference in patient outcomes.

“For the average person, we recommend starting prostate cancer screenings around the age of 50. However, if there is a family history of prostate cancer or if the patient is from an African American background, we advise starting earlier, around 40 to 45 years old,” explains *Zuhair Ghanem, MD, Internal Medicine Physician and Oncologist at Aspirus Health.*

The primary screening tool for prostate cancer is the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, which measures the level of PSA in the blood. Elevated levels may indicate prostate cancer, prompting further evaluation. In conjunction with the PSA test, a digital rectal exam (DRE) may also be performed to detect cancers that may not elevate PSA levels, providing a comprehensive approach to screening.

While prostate cancer screenings are effective, one of the challenges is that the disease often develops without noticeable symptoms. Although some patients may eventually experience signs like pelvic pain, lower back pain, blood in the urine, or difficulty urinating, prostate cancer may remain asymptomatic until the cancer progresses. This reality underscores the vital importance of regular screenings for early detection.

“I wish more men understood the importance of early detection,” Dr. Ghanem emphasizes. “Early detection is the cornerstone of taking care of cancer patients, and it can significantly impact overall outcomes and well-being.”

Prioritize your health by discussing prostate cancer screenings with your doctor. Regular screenings are important. Remember early detection could save your life.

Editor's Note: In B.C. we have a couple of 'roadblocks' to overcome; firstly our B.C. government doesn't cover the cost of a screening PSA and secondly some of our family physicians are against the PSA as a screening test. Please insist on it, it's your body and your right to a PSA screening test. Those of us who have been through prostate cancer know the importance of the PSA. In our area a screening PSA test costs \$25.00 – that's a Toonie a month for 12 months and then add a Loonie on your birthday.

The History of the PSA Test

The prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test was first developed in the 1970s by T. Ming Chu and his team at Roswell Park Memorial Institute. The American Association for Cancer Research has called the PSA test one of the "Landmark Scientific Discoveries of the 20th Century".

A patent was issued in **1984** to the state of New York and Roswell Park. The technology was transferred to the biomedical industry for preparing testing kits.

In **1984** Chu received the patent for the discovery of "purified human prostate antigen".

1986 – The FDA approved the first commercial PSA test, the Hybritech Tandem-R PSA test.

The PSA test also received FDA approval in **1986** as a monitor for treatment response and disease recurrence.

In **1994** the PSA test was given FDA approval to be used as an early detection aid for the diagnosis of prostate cancer.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness group does not recommend treatment modalities or physicians: However, all information is fully shared and is confidential. The information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the services of your health professionals regarding matters of your personal health.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group would like to thank Janssen - and TerSera for their support and educational grants that go towards our newsletters and our support group.



UP COMING MEETING DATES FOR 2024 – 2025

NOTE: - Jan. 11/25 – Feb. 8 – March 8 – April 12 – May 10 – June 14

Meeting Location:

Our meetings take place in the Harvest Room at Trinity Church located at the corner of Springfield Road and Spall Road. Please enter through the South Entrance off the main parking lot and follow the signs upstairs to the Harvest Room. Our meetings begin at 9:00 A.M. and the doors open at 8:30 A.M. There is elevator access if needed.

NOTE: Many of our past newsletters are available for viewing and printing through our website. – www.kelownaprostate.com

- A big *Thank You to Doris at Affordable Web Design for all her work on our website*