



LISA WOLFE

Breast Cancer Survivor Story

"You've got breast cancer," he said and my body went numb.

I was 32 when I heard those words after a biopsy punch two days prior at the diagnostic imaging center. I felt a lump conveniently after my right breast had an itch one bright day January 29th. It was a Tuesday and after I had felt the lump, I went into denial. I waited 2 weeks before going in because I was scared and nervous.

When I received the news February 12th 2008 that I had stage 0 breast cancer, I was a bit confused. I had never heard of stage 0 before and that left me more confused. When I shared my news to my family and to the co-workers that were like family, they were also questioning what stage 0 was. Some of my co-workers felt like I was exaggerating, and that I really didn't have breast cancer. That was a blow to my already anxious feelings about all of this. After a while I grew tough and wanted to know more. Shortly after I was diagnosed, Christina Applegate was diagnosed with stage 0 breast cancer. Unlike me, she had a family history of breast cancer and went to have a double mastectomy done. It made giving the news better knowing that I had a celebrity to relate to, that stage 0 was a real stage of breast cancer.

My doctor at the time had me coming in every 4-6 months for a mammogram and an ultrasound. I switched jobs and came to have Sutter as my new health provider. My doctor was wonderful, and looking at the scans she assessed that I could go every 6 months to a year for the tests. As the years passed, I started to get more lumps which meant more biopsies. At one point I had 5 new fibroadenomas show up causing the tissue to be painful and my lymph nodes to swell and be angry. Every mammogram and ultrasound showed another couple tumors thankfully benign. I was tired of having punch biopsies, tired of being in pain, and mostly just tired of waiting for the cancer to go to the next stage. I discussed options with my doctor



with one of them being tamoxifen. I had already had a partial hysterectomy back in 2005, and I really didn't want to mess with my estrogen levels. So I decided to have a bilateral mastectomy. I met A LOT of backlash from fellow survivors which saddened me. They asked why would I do that to myself, and wow that's drastic for stage 0, but this was my decision and my body. I'm more comfortable knowing that I'm no longer a ticking time bomb, just waiting for the cancer to become worse. My body image isn't a reflection of my personality. I am amazing with or without breasts, and I wear my scars proudly.

"Early detection leads to survival"

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