

Breast Cancer

I love you, I love you.

Miranda Moss is a busy mom who, despite working 12-hour days as a restaurant owner, has always found time to stay healthy. One morning while getting dressed, she discovered a lump in her left breast.

I just thought it was something different like a cyst, maybe, but I felt that as a responsible mother I should have it seen.

It turned out that Miranda had breast cancer.

After being diagnosed, tests are needed to learn more about it. These include imaging scans, hormone receptor tests and genetic testing of the tumor.

These tests will help your doctor determine: The size of the tumor; If the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes; If the cancer has spread to other parts of the body; Estrogen receptor status; Progesterone receptor status; Her2/neu status;

And the grade of the cancer.

Some breast cancers need the hormones estrogen or progesterone to help them grow. Others contain a protein that makes them grow more quickly and aggressively.

All of this information is used to put breast cancer into stage groups. The groups range from 0-4, with stage 0 being the lowest. The cancer is only found in the breast duct.

Stage 4 is the highest meaning that the cancer has spread to other parts of the body like the bones, brain or liver. The other stages range in between.

Take a deep breath...and out.

The staging of breast cancer is complex, but the more information about the cancer, the better doctors can focus on the best treatment for you.

There are several different treatment options for breast cancer.

Miranda's treatment included a mastectomy, which is surgery to remove the breast.

A mastectomy removes the whole breast, lymph nodes, and possibly some of the surrounding tissue around the breast. A double mastectomy removes both breasts. After a mastectomy you can choose to have reconstructive surgery to rebuild your breast.

Doctors can treat smaller tumors with breast-conserving surgery called lumpectomy. This procedure removes only the part of the breast where the tumor is located, and some of the healthy tissue around it.

Another treatment option is radiation, which uses high-energy x-rays to kill cancer cells.

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Having radiation before surgery can help shrink the tumor and make it easier to remove. You can also have radiation after surgery to kill the remaining cancer cells that are left behind.

Chemotherapy is another treatment your doctor might try before or after your surgery. It uses medicines to kill cancer cells all over your body. If your cancer has spread, it could be your main treatment.

Hormone therapy uses drugs to lower the amount of hormones in your body that cancer cells need to grow.

And targeted therapy blocks certain proteins, genes, and other substances that help breast cancer grow.

Immunotherapy is medication that boosts your own immune system and white blood cells to target the cancer cells directly. This helps limit the damage caused by the cancer cells and its spread.

And over time as we treat it everything shrank down and continues to shrink down even today.

Today's breast cancer treatments are very effective, but there's still a chance the cancer can come back.

Chapter 2.

That's what happened to Miranda.

A few months after my surgery I started to notice a gradual decline in energy, I started feeling really fatigued, and eventually found a new lump in my stomach.

Miranda's breast cancer had spread. After getting chemotherapy and radiation, she enrolled in a clinical trial, that is, a research study, of an experimental therapy.

Research studies can give you access to a treatment that's not yet available to the public, and it might be more effective than standard breast cancer drugs.

Will you teach me how to draw cutie eyes Bowie, cuz I don't know how to draw that. Okay, Mummy.

The treatment has dramatically shrunk Miranda's cancer. She says the experience of living with breast cancer has given her a new outlook on life.