

Fighting CANCER with Faith:

Stephanie's Journey Continues



"I beat it once, I'll beat it again."

Patient Stephanie Madsen describes her journey with battling cancer as not only a fight for her life but a story to share with others; a story to motivate, encourage and give hope to others in her shoes. She speaks candidly about her ups and downs on her blog, www.derailingmydiagnosis.com.

Stephanie was diagnosed with neuroendocrine cancer of the cervix in early 2012. After having surgery and undergoing an aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatment, she was told she was cancer-free. "I was super excited!" says Stephanie, "I thought, I can finally move on and start planning the future."

Stephanie and her husband Matt discovered the treatments had left them unable to conceive, so they made the decision to consider adoption. In the midst of planning, Stephanie started having pain in her stomach. "I felt this hard lump on my left side," she explains, "I knew something wasn't right and I was praying my cancer wasn't back." Next she would receive news she'd hoped not to hear, doctors found a massive tumor the size of a softball. Not only was her cancer back, she would have to undergo emergency surgery

to remove it. "I took it a lot harder than the first time," says Stephanie, "this time I knew what it was and I knew it wasn't going away."

Swedish gynecologic oncologist, Dr. Mary Jo Schmitz has seen Stephanie through her battle and performed her surgery. Stephanie says overall the surgery went well and the good news was the tumor hadn't attached to any other organ and it was successfully removed from her body. "I was in the best hands and I had complete confidence in my doctor," she explains.

Since surgery, Stephanie has been put back on a treatment plan. She will have chemotherapy once a week for six weeks. "It's a constant battle, but I'm confident that I will be cured again. I believe my story can help a lot of people, I truly believe I wouldn't be able to fully understand cancer if I didn't have this recurrence. I'm a fighter and I'm not giving up."

If you would like to follow Stephanie's journey, check out her blog at www.derailingmydiagnosis.com. •