

## **My Life Threatening Experience with Colorectal Cancer**

By: Kenneth R. Schena, CLU

I retired as Managing Director of the Naples office of a large insurance company on May 31st of 2002. Immediately after retirement my son Blaine, who worked in my office, and I started "The Schena Financial Group". Because our firm was very busy with startup, I postponed my annual physical until the following year.

In June of 2003 I went in for a physical at Advanced Medical just prior to leaving for a vacation visit to New Hampshire where three of my children still lived. While there I received a call from a nurse advising that Dr. Leach wanted me to have an upper and lower CAT scan because of something he saw in my X-Ray. I scheduled and underwent the CAT-Scan at Exeter Community Hospital and the results were sent to the doctor in Naples, Florida.

I received another call from the doctor's office inquiring when I would be returning to Naples which was early August. The doctor scheduled me for further exam on the day following my return. I was naturally concerned and did not tell my wife Virginia because I did not want to cause her to worry and spoil her visit with our children.

When I visited the doctor he explained that the X-Ray showed a speculated mass on one of my lungs and he wanted to do further checking and a biopsy of the tissue. I went to a lung specialist and passed all the tests associated therewith. When I went to the Naples Community Hospital for the biopsy, the doctor on call looked at my X-Rays and decided to take another scan, which he did and concluded the mass was caused from having had Pneumonia or Bronchitis when I was growing up. He elected not to do the biopsy and advised me to keep a close watch on it.

The doctor scheduled me for a stress test which I underwent and then a Colonoscopy the which I underwent the next day. The doctor who performed the Colonoscopy called me the following day with the bad news, there was a large polyp that showed evidence of carcinoma. He recommended that I consult a Colorectal Surgeon immediately to determine appropriate treatment.

I came home and started searching the internet for Colorectal Surgeons and much to my amazement; two of the top surgeons in the country were located at The Cleveland Clinic Hospital in Naples, Florida. I called and scheduled an appointment with Dr. Jonathan Efron. Dr. Efron did a test and recommended that I first see an Oncologist and recommended Dr. Mark Moskowitz . From this point my life went totally upside down.

Dr. Moskowitz picked up the phone and scheduled me to have Dr. Efron surgically implant a dual port catheter in my chest the following morning at 6:00AM. He also called Dr. Bruce Nakfor and scheduled me for a position cast required for radiation and to have markers tattooed on my body to allow the radiation machine to accurately repeat the application process.

The following Monday I was at Dr. Moskowitz's office to start Chemo Therapy which lasted about 5 hours. They then hooked up an electric pump the size of an old Sony walkman which was belted to me and had a line running into the port catheter in my chest. I was informed that this was to be on 24 hours/ day for 5 days and I was to return on Friday of each week to have it removed, returning the following Monday for

reinstallation. This schedule was to go on for 6 weeks. Each Monday about 4 hours of Chemo and hookup of the pump.

I would leave the Chemo treatment and rush to the radiation treatment which was 20 minutes each weekday for 6 weeks. I am a tennis player and continued to play weekends for the first 4 weeks as the treatment progressed but stopped after that time due to nausea that began to engulf my body. It was not a pleasant experience to say the least but it probably saved my life.

At the end of 6 weeks I flew up to Boston and got a second opinion from surgeon Dr. Shalito at Mass General Hospital and he confirmed the diagnosis of the Naples doctors. He offered to perform the surgery but I elected to have it done close to home by Dr. Efron. The surgery was performed at the Cleveland Clinic Hospital which I found to be an outstanding facility.

I returned home and became intimately familiar with the Jacuzzi in our bathroom. I previously took only showers, but soaking in the tub was the only relief I got. I read more novels during this experience than in my entire previous life. Six weeks later December 2003 I went in for colorectal surgery at the Cleveland Clinic Hospital. The surgery was performed by Dr. Jonathan Efron assisted by Dr. Susan Cera. The staff was outstanding and the food was equal to a gourmet restaurant.

When I woke up in the hospital I had a bag hanging on my left side and knew from the doctor's previous explanation that I had a permanent Colostomy. The doctor had told me that if there was any possibility of a temporary pouch it would be on my right side, so I knew it was a fixture in my life. I walked the hospital perimeter for exercise which helped accelerate my recovery. The doctor walked into my room on the 5th day in the hospital and asked if I wanted to go home; you bet I did, I could not get dressed fast enough.

Arriving home presented a whole new prospective on life adjusting to this foreign object on my abdomen. I am generally a very positive person but I certainly went through the "why me" syndrome. As with others in this same position, I finally accepted that this was to be with me for the duration of my life and I had to make the best of living with it. Following surgery I went through 4 weeks of post operative chemo therapy to be as certain as possible all cancer cells had been destroyed.

The bath tub became my salvation and I spent 3 or 4 hours each day soaking and reading. The next surprise was caring for the Colostomy system and dealing with the pouch and more specifically the chore of emptying it when full. I went on the internet and tried to find a system that reflected the 20th century and could not find one. I could not believe in this day and age no system was available to deal with cleaning the pouch in a way that made life livable.

I started out using bottles of water that I would pour down the drain end of the pouch which I would elevate to hold the water. I would then seal off the drain and shake the water around to help free the contents. I would repeat this process several times until I felt the pouch was clean. The process would take 15 minutes to ½ hour and would be a disaster if you slipped (had a few of those). I reasoned that if I could somehow get water into the pouch on the top while sitting on the commode, my life would improve about 90 %.

After two or three weeks of dealing with the pouch I had my wife drive me to the local hobby shop and the hardware store and I bought the components which were used to construct the first Ostomy EZ-Clean™ System. I build and fly radio control model airplanes and my education was engineering so addressing the problem came natural. The system was designed to allow the user to sit on the toilet, hook-up a specially

designed water feed to an inlet opening on the top of the pouch, open the drain and press a thumb trigger that expels all the waste. The system flushes out the waste and cleans the stoma to prevent any rash or infection from bacteria in the waste. I feel like I have taken a shower after using my system.

I subsequently created a company called Schena Ostomy Technologies, Inc. which is "Dedicated to Improving Ostomy Lifestyle". We have tested the prototypes with other users who all agree that their life changed with the E-Z Clean™ system. Years of refinement and testing have produced a perfected pouch that I am very proud of. You can now buy this system which is Medicare Approved from your local medical supplier. I have designed more innovative products to help normalize your life with an ostomy and they will be introduced soon.

If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at 239 263-9957, or write to me at 2313 Harrier Run, Naples, Florida 34105, e-mail; HYPERLINK "mailto:kenschena@comcast.net" kenschena@comcast.net. You can also check my web site at HYPERLINK "http://www.ostomyezclean.com" www.ostomyezclean.com which shows the system which is now patented (United States Design Patent Number D607559). I have multiple other patents pending and have also applied for patents in the PCT (Patent Cooperative Treaty) countries and Canada.

#### EZ-Clean System in Use Stored Position

There are approximately 1,050,000 Ostomates in the United States and about 5,000,000 throughout the rest of the world that live their daily lives with a Colostomy, Ileostomy or Urostomy. The EZ-Clean System is being used by ostomates throughout this country to normalize their life after surgery that has left them with a Colostomy or Ileostomy. There are two major obstacle challenges that face each now ostomate: (1.) Finding a pouch appliance that works for their abdominal contour and seals airtight to prevent any odor or leakage. (2.) Having the ability to clean the pouch when it fills with body waste in minimal time and without physical contact with same.

The EZ-Clean System was designed to accomplish the two major obstacles thereby allowing the ostomate to lead a normal life after this life saving surgery. Surgery can be the result of Colitis, Diverticulitis or Colon Cancer that makes the Colostomy or Ileostome a necessary life saving procedure. It has been estimated that approximately 110,000 patients undergo this procedure each year in the United States. The yearly attrition has been estimated at 47,000 due to death or reversal surgery which is possible in some cases.

There is a national support group called UOAA (United Ostomy Association of America) with Chapters in most major cities throughout the United States. The Collier County Support Group was organized about ten years ago and meets the second Wednesday of each month at the Telford Learning Center next to Naples Community Hospital. The chapter presents programs which include doctors, WOCN nurses and manufacturer's of ostomy products to the members each month designed to educate and inform members of timely information. The Chapter web site is <http://www.ostomysupportnaples.com> www.ostomysupportnaples.com and has all the contact numbers to provide help to those who need it. Educated members are available to call on new ostomates to offer support.

I sincerely hope this article reaches anyone in need of information and help in dealing with the surgery that has created a stoma in their life. Remember, help is a telephone call away that can restore your life to a normal state.

Best wishes,

Kenneth R. Schena