

At 33 years old and 38 weeks pregnant, I was diagnosed with a triple positive invasive ductal carcinoma. I had noticed a lump at the top of my right breast at about 9 months pregnant and after limited imaging had a biopsy. This biopsy had been the third biopsy in 2 years with the first two being benign cysts. With almost no family history of cancer (and no breast cancer) we went in to round 3 believing this was just another biopsy we were "getting out of the way" before Baby Boy Seth was born.

Unfortunately, we were wrong. At the end of October 2018, I received the call to come in to meet with my OB and learned that the mass was in fact breast cancer.

Pregnancy presented challenges in the ability to develop an accurate image of the cancer. At biopsy, the tumor was said to be about 1 cm and 2 weeks later it appeared to be about 4.65 cm. We made the decision to induce labor to allow for the start of treatment. After 2 inductions and 40 hours of labor, Jaxson healthfully joined our family on 11-8-2018. I spent the next week preparing for treatment and began treatment when he was just 2 weeks old. After 4 months of chemo, I had a bilateral mastectomy and learned I was cancer free in April 2019! We also learned that while I had a complete response the tumor bed suggested my tumor was more likely 8cms large (that's a big one!). Because of the size, my next challenge was 25 radiation treatments over 5 weeks. Through all of this I have had a tremendous support system of family and friends with my number one being my husband Matthew. As fate would have it, I completed my radiation treatment the day before our 5th wedding anniversary and the weekend of Father's Day!

It was not uncommon for those learning of my diagnosis, the toddler and newborn at home, to respond with sadness and apologies for me having to face this at what was to be a celebratory time. Do I wish my family did not have to experience this? Absolutely. That thought comes up often in the constant spiral of emotions, but I have been mostly grateful. I am grateful that I was seeing a doctor regularly because of my pregnancy. I am grateful that I had an OB who listened to me and prioritized my care. I am grateful that my children are young enough to not understand the truth of cancer. I am grateful for the Mama Bear strength they give me and that I can be their Superhero Mommy!

I have learned that every warrior's experience of breast cancer will be different and that in some ways once you have breast cancer you will always have breast cancer. My Linked By Pink Sisters understand this, and I am grateful to have the support of LBP as I begin this next chapter of Survivorship.

~Christi Seth  
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