

Jayne's Story: Surviving Breast Cancer

Hello. My name is Jayne Edmonds and I live near Wrexham, North Wales. I have two adult children but no grandchildren yet! I have been a primary school teacher for 30 years. It is the only thing I have ever wanted to do.

In April 2022 I visited my GP having found a hard lump at the very base of my right breast. I had noticed it a few months prior but as I had lost a lot of weight I did think it was just a prominent rib bone. I was in the best physical shape I had ever been in.

Diagnosis

In early May biopsies of the lump and some lymph nodes in my right armpit were taken and in clinic on 6th June it was confirmed that cancer had been found both in the breast tissue and lymph node samples. A raft of scans and tests quickly followed including several CT and MRI scans of various parts of my body to determine where the cancer may have spread to. More biopsies of lymph nodes were taken and on July 30th I was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer.

Treatment

I began chemotherapy on 10th August 2022 with 18 doses ahead of me. The plan was to follow this up with surgery and the possibility of some sessions of radiotherapy. This would depend on what the surgery results revealed.

The thought of what was to come was daunting. Of all things, I was most concerned with losing my hair and I was recommended to have cold cap treatment. It worked really well.

Chemotherapy was brutal. Even though I was extremely fatigued, I could not sleep, and no amount of rest seemed to help. The lymph nodes throughout my body were inflamed and very painful and I ached all over. I felt 100 years old instead of 51.

A few months in and the smell of food made me really nauseous. I would force myself to eat but I was starting to lose weight and muscle mass. As my immune system suffered it was taking me longer to bounce back after treatments. I began to develop painful sores in my mouth, on my gums and inside my lips. My lips were dry and cracked and swallowing was starting to become more difficult. The best things to eat were grapes straight from the fridge and cold yoghurts.

Even though I used a soft toothbrush and soft bristled toothpaste it hurt to clean my teeth. When I asked for help the nurses prescribed a mouthwash which did nothing to help. It seemed that this was all that the hospital could offer. I even tried salt water rinses.



Experience with GelX



After three months of treatment my husband, a nurse himself, was told about GelX by another colleague. As this was a new product neither the nurses nor my GP had heard of it. I had to specifically request some on prescription. GelX was a miracle. I sprayed it three times a day straight onto the sores and over my red and swollen gums. I couldn't believe the difference it made. It helped me to eat and speak with less pain. The difference was incredible.

I feel so lucky to have found Gel X as early in my treatment as I did. I am not sure how I would have managed had I not.

On January 15th 2023, a week before my 52nd birthday I had surgery to remove the cancer marker and four lymph nodes. All the staff on the ward were fantastic. True heroes who had patience and took great care of me. I felt I was in safe and caring hands.

Three weeks later I began radiotherapy and had 6 doses. I continued using GelX throughout as I was scared that my symptoms might return. I didn't want to run the risk.

I finished treatment 8 months ago and have returned to work. I do still worry about cancer returning but I know that I am very lucky to still be here. I got to ring the bell.

