

In October 2018, at age 62, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. My PSA was stable at 1.6 over 10 years (2006 - 2016). In 2017 it went up to 2.5 and in 2018 to 3.2. My urologist recommended an MRI followed by a targeted biopsy. From the 12 regular biopsy cores 11 showed no sign of cancer and one came back at Gleason 7 (3+4), from the targeted area 2 of 5 cores were also at 7 (3+4). My urologist said that a prostatectomy is the treatment with the highest chance of beating the cancer. I agreed and the surgery was scheduled for February 5, 2019. I joined two UsToo support groups and educated myself more about prostate cancer. 1 week before the scheduled surgery I decided to postpone the surgery for 6 months and go on active surveillance instead. After getting 4 more opinions (2 urologists, oncologist and a naturopathic physician) and more investigations I could not see myself undergoing surgery with all the side effects. In April 2019, I found out about a non-invasive procedure offered as a clinical trial at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, MRI guided focal laser or cryo ablation. Two weeks later, I was invited for more checkups to see if I was a candidate for that trial, and another week later on May 15, 2019, I had the MRI guided focal cryo ablation. I spent one night in the hospital, 2 days with a catheter, no pain, no side effects at all. The cryo ablation killed about 30% of my prostate and the expected PSA after treatment was 1.1. It actually is at exactly that number and stable since then. I have a PSA test every 3 months and an MRI every 6 months until I reach the 2-year mark.

At the 2-year mark (May 2021) my PSA is at 0.95 and the MRI demonstrates no evidence of recurrent/residual disease. Future tests are every 6 months for PSA and 12 months for MRI.

At the 4-year mark (May 2023) my PSA is at 1.3, the lowest in 18 months. The MRI shows stable-appearing post ablation changes to the right peripheral zone without specific MR findings to suggest local recurrence. Also, the untreated portion of the prostate gland is without suspicious lesion by PIRADS criteria.

I am at the important 5-year mark (May 2024). My PSA is at 1.5, same as 6 months ago. The MRI shows no sign of reoccurrence. I am going on annual check-ups now with PSA test and MRI.

I am very happy that I did not let my urologist rush me into surgery and that I do not have to deal with any side effects.

If anyone has questions about my story, please feel free to contact me at hje1956r@gmail.com.