



Diagnosed with testicular cancer aged 24

ANDY LIMB

"I DO FEEL LIKE A BIT OF A CHEAT AS I HAD EASY MODE CANCER. THE DOCTOR TOLD ME IF I WAS TO GET ANY TYPE OF CANCER THAT THIS WAS THE BEST ONE AND THAT I WAS LUCKY AS I HAD CAUGHT IT EARLY."

Andy Limb, 24, was aware of testicular cancer as his stepfather had suffered from it, but he never thought that one day he would get it. Earlier this year (2011) while working behind the hot food counter in Asda, Andy leant over the counter but banged himself very hard in his groin area. He explains, "It was so painful. My colleague had to take over while I went into the back of the store to get my breath back. My right testicle was really swollen; it was a bit like a golf ball."

Over the next couple of days Andy kept checking himself, he couldn't detect a lump but the swelling had not subsided. "I decided to go to my GP just to make sure everything was okay. The doctor confirmed the testicle was just swollen and to keep checking it and to come back in a week's time. I continued to check myself every day and everything was normal, until a week after I found a small lump, a bit like a grain of rice. It was very, very small."

Andy returned to his GP and she immediately referred him to the hospital. His appointment was a week and a half later, however, during this period he found a second lump this time larger than the first one. "I spent a considerable amount of time researching testicular cancer on the Internet. I convinced myself it was cancer, then, if I was told anything different by the doctors it would be good news."

On 4 July 2011, Andy attended King's Mill Hospital, Mansfield, and following a blood test it was confirmed he had testicular cancer. He was booked in for an inguinal orchidectomy - an operation to remove the testicle. Andy said, "It was a relief to finally know what it was. However, I do feel like a bit of a cheat as I had easy mode cancer. The doctor told me if I was to get any type of cancer that this was the best one and that I was lucky as I had caught it early. I told myself I was going to beat it, in fact, the doctor said the survival rate is over 95%, so I do consider myself lucky."

Andy's operation was booked in a week later and he had his right testicle removed. Following additional blood tests he was told he would require a course of chemotherapy, which would take place at City Hospital, Nottingham, which has a dedicated Oncology department.

Two and a half weeks after the operation Andy returned to City Hospital and was told that he no longer needed chemotherapy. "I was chuffed to bits with this news as I really didn't want to have chemo. However, I still need to go to the hospital once a month to have my tumour markers checked via a blood test. I also need to have a CT scan every three months for next two years and a physical check-up every month for a year. These observations will gradually decrease over time but I still need to be monitored for the next 10 years."

Andy is back at work now, he adds, "I feel stronger as a person. I was much more grown-up about having cancer than I ever expected I would be. It was such a relief to know what it was and to find out that it had been caught early, but I remember I was more worried about my family than I was about myself!"

When asked what advice he had for other young men he said, "Well, I feel like a bit of cheat, I was lucky, but please check yourself regularly and most importantly, if you find something don't ignore it, do something about it straight away."