

I was at my Dermatologist as soon as I returned from a vacation; I had spotted a black raised mole. Unfortunately, my slide was misread thus creating nothing but health issues since that time. I can't believe that was in 1996!

I can certainly state that I was a sun worshiper. I grew up in Michigan on a lake and during the summer I was boating, water skiing, and sun tanning. During the sixties, being tan was "IN" big time. My father had melanoma on his face and it was removed by a famous plastic surgeon when he was 49. I did not put this together until I was diagnosed; there is a genetic predisposition with melanoma and I certainly have his coloring, blond hair, blue eyes and fair skin.

I am stage four, having had seven surgeries, including my right axilla for lymph node removal and a melanoma tumor in my lung that was removed. The last two cases (in 2005) were in the left femur and one tumor in the pancreatic bile duct. This resulted in having Whipple surgery. Since then, any lump gets removed, such as the one on the bottom of my foot just last year. I see the dermatologist every three months and Dr. Rothschild the same. Being aggressive is extremely important. I get a PET scan every seven to eight months, and an MRI of the brain once a year.

We are going to need support groups because melanoma is increasing each and I am glad to receive phone calls. We need more survivor stories.

Best wishes,
Martie Wrock