



Patient: Diane Clayton



Family

Diane and
Husband Joe

Diane Clayton was on a monitoring schedule; she'd had a tough bout with lung cancer back in 1995, when a tumor was removed from her right lung and she had undergone radiation treatment.

In July of this year, an X-ray showed a mass in her chest; a CAT scan showed it was a tumor in her left lung, one that had involved nearby lymph nodes.

"We considered surgery, but because of the way the tumor was situated, you couldn't remove it without removing the entire lung – and we couldn't do that, because of the prior procedures she'd had done to her other lung," Dr. Burtzo says.

"So after we had her physical pain under control, we considered treatment options. She went with a combination of radiation and chemotherapy, even though it is more challenging in the short-term, because the long-term prognosis is better."

Clayton faces serious medical challenges, but she's a fighter – and Dr. Burtzo says that is encouraging for him and healthy for her.

"She's doing great. She's going through this like a trooper. I'm optimistic we can prolong her survival, and I'm optimistic we can put off the symptoms. There's a lot to be optimistic about. Even with knowing everything that she does, she continues to give her treatment 100 percent. Her attitude and strength are unique," says Dr. Burtzo.

Optimism

A Family Affair

Diane Clayton

Diane Clayton has known cancer before. Her husband Joe is a seven-year survivor of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and she is a twelve-year survivor of lung cancer. "Did I mention to you that my brother is also a cancer survivor?" she asks. "Unfortunately, cancer is not a stranger in our family."

"Diane is very enthusiastic and optimistic for a patient with a recurrence, and that is so refreshing to all of us as well as other patients. She is truly a role model!" says Cheryl Ohlhayer, RN, her nurse at PSMG.

After both Diane and Joe were diagnosed with cancer, they decided to move from the Pacific Palisades to Irvine to be closer to daughter Allison, her husband Jay and their two adorable grandchildren, Patrick, 2 and Nicholas, 8.

"My family is my passion. To be honest, this recurrence took me by surprise," says Diane. "I love to swim. One day while swimming, I experienced chest pain and shortness of breath. I was concerned enough to take myself to the emergency room. After several tests it was discovered that my lung cancer had come back. I now had NSCLC and I was devastated."

"However, my faith in God and the love and support from my family keeps me going strong. The most comforting to all of us is the outstanding care provided by Dr. David Burtzo. He is so smart, so experienced, and most of all he has great compassion."

Joe, her husband, says, "I am a survivor and I really understand what Diane is going through. I will always be by her side."

Allison spends lots of time with her mom. "We are extremely close and to this day, we always will enjoy our 'girl time' together," she says. "We are planning a trip to New York City together, thanks to my loving husband Jay who will be 'Mr. Mom' while we're gone."

As Diane completes her treatment she looks forward to swimming again and living life as she knows it to be.

Daughter Allison with Husband Jay
Children Nicholas (left) and Patrick

Lung Cancer