

BY  
**Robyn  
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## CANCER IS NOT A DEATH SENTENCE

**Whether an unexpected diagnosis or the feeling that something just isn't right, cancer is best dealt with head on.**

Even though Nigel Richardson was only 39 at the time, a routine medical exam sent warning bells that he could potentially have prostate cancer.

When the results returned positive, Nigel barely hesitated and knew that, despite his age, he would have his prostate removed.

"Of course I had to think about the options, but I knew that if I got the prostate removed and would not have to worry about it anymore was the best option for me."



Photo supplied by Nigel Richardson

While Nigel had two older children, he and his then-girlfriend took the necessary steps to potentially have another child in the future.

"Not to be able to have anymore children was worrying, but in the end I now have a seven-year-old son. The decision I took then was not the end of the world."

March will mark 11 years of being cancer free for Nigel, who works in the forensics department of the Bermuda Police Service.

"I was healthy and active before my diagnosis, I was not one to just sit around on the couch, but the diagnosis was very unexpected."

Later on he would discover that prostate cancer runs in his family. It's something that he hopes to raise awareness for others. And that getting regularly checked is important as you can be as fit and healthy but still have a potential for genetic susceptibility to cancer.

"Men don't like going to get checked and Black men in particular for whatever reason, but if you're not going to take care of yourself, then who will? The more



people hear about it and the awareness grows, I hope that will help."

Arthur Glasford, 50, knew he also had to take his own care into his hands when a life-long sinus infection got progressively worse, including excessive bleeding and discomfort. It didn't seem right with him, and his wife, Pandora insisted he needed to get further checks.

"It's a difficult conversation to have with your doctor but you have to be your own advocate," Arthur tells *SheHUB Magazine*. "When it's your health and your life you not only think about yourself but also how it will impact other people."

On top of pushing his doctor for a referral to a nose, ear and throat specialist, Arthur also had to battle the early stages of the pandemic and the possibility that under the circumstances he could potentially contract Covid-19.

But regardless of the circumstances, Arthur pushed ahead and last May, a blockage was discovered in his nasal passage. Further tests revealed squamous cell carcinoma.

By August, Dr Philip Bell, a head and neck surgeon in Bermuda, was able to remove 80 percent of the blockage from Arthur's nose.

"The polyp was getting progressively bigger and bigger and they were able to remove about the size of a golf ball," he recalls.

Arthur was then sent on to Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Where the cancer was growing was not a normal place.

Thankfully, tests revealed the cancer was stage one. But with the potential for it to be spread, a delicate surgery to remove the rest of the polyp was necessary. A team from plastic surgery, brain surgery and oncology worked on Arthur's case.

"There was a potential that my facial appearance would change; it was a very small area that they would

be working on."

The surgery was scheduled and then another blow occurred - a hurricane was heading towards the island, and while the cancer was slow moving, Arthur did not want to miss the chance to have the surgery done as soon as possible.

"The surgery was successful, and I really have to thank Dr Bell and his team here. He made the second surgery go much easier," says Arthur. "I had no serious side effects after the surgery. It was all done by camera, and I flew back after the operation about three days later."

On his return, Arthur was able to be treated with radiation therapy on island through Bermuda Cancer and Health.

Although a potential Covid exposure could have derailed going through the last weeks of his treatment, protocols put in place at Bermuda Cancer and Health meant he wouldn't miss an appointment.

Because of his on island treatment, Arthur was still able to carry out his duties as Chief inspector with the Bermuda Police Service.

He was even able to remain physically fit: "I can't say that it

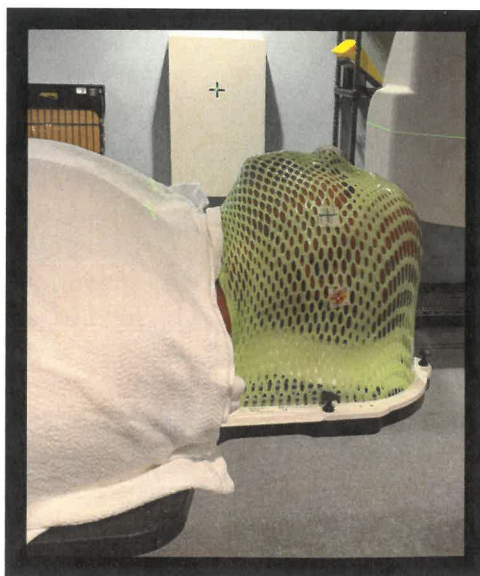
wasn't hard, but my trainer, who was one of very few people to know about my diagnosis, worked with me."

While some may look at a cancer diagnosis as a death sentence, Arthur recommends keeping your circle small to help maintain positivity throughout treatment.

"My wife and my mom were a really huge support. I'm in remission now and I'm really thankful to Bermuda Cancer and Health and their relationship with Brigham and Women's. Their collaborative



Photos supplied by Arthur Glasford



approach meant that Bermuda is definitely equipped to deal with cancer diagnosis.

"It was a double whammy with Covid and a cancer diagnosis but they kept me positive and that with my age and health it never felt like I couldn't beat it." ▶

» Robyn Bardgett is a Bermuda-based freelance writer.