

IN HIS OWN WORDS:

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I GOT MY 'ENGINE' CHECKED

By Alan Bodner

In February, 2010, I attended a Men's Health Awareness Day, also known as "Gentlemen Check Your Engines," at the Bergen County, NJ Harley-Davidson store. When I stopped at a Prostate Cancer booth, the doctor asked me how old I was and if I'd ever had a PSA test. When I told him I was 63 and didn't know what a PSA test was, he told me it was a test for Prostate Cancer. He also said that 1 in 5 men get Prostate Cancer and, if I had it, my life could end in only 10 years. So I called my doctor to set up an appointment for a physical. He told me that my last visit was 7 years ago and asked why it took me so long to come in. I told him that I didn't feel sick! I also told him that I had learned about PSA tests and decided to come get a physical.

The first PSA blood test came back with a 6.4 reading. I was told that anything above 4.0 wasn't good, so my doctor asked me to come in for another PSA test. The second one came back again as a 6.4. Then I called Urology Specialty Care, where my daughter, Robyn, works as an RN. She arranged for me to meet with Dr. John Hajjar. He reviewed my PSA results and recommended a prostate biopsy that would show if there is cancer and how much. The biopsy took 10 samples and I had 3 "hot spots" [spots on the prostate positive for cancer]. Dr. Hajjar said radical prostate surgery would be the best option for me and that my recovery would be very good. He added that there was a downside--I wouldn't be able to have more children. I told him that having children at the age of 63 was not high on my list, but life was!

I was diagnosed at the end of May, 2010. I told the doctor I planned to go to Sturgis for the Motorcycle Rally with my friends in August. He said we should do the surgery as soon as possible, since it would take 8 weeks for me to recover. On August 4th, my 3 friends and I left on our bikes for Sturgis! My friends were great—they let me take all the time I needed at gas stops to use the bathroom. We had a great time. Thanks to the Men's Awareness Day and Dr. Hajjar, I can go there again someday. Next summer I'll be going on RT66, the only highway to go on if you ride a motorcycle. This time I'll take a tire repair kit and a small compressor, but that is another story to tell.

To all men: do yourself a big favor—go for a PSA test even if you are only 45. Like all cancers, if they are found early, they can be treated. For men that are young and would like to have children, there are other types of treatments if you are diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. If you are unsure about a doctor's opinion on treatment, go to another doctor for a second opinion. In the end it's your life that you should be concerned with. Remember, your family would like to have you around for a long time.

[EDITORS NOTE: The 2011 Global Gentlemen Check Your Engines™ Day will be held Saturday, February 12th

The New Jersey program will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Bergen County, NJ, Harley-Davidson/BMW at 124 Essex Street-Rochelle Park. For more information, call (201) 843-6930.

LADIES & GENTLEMEN: CHECK YOUR ENGINES !!]