



The Never-Ending Squirrel Tale

You Know You're a Teen with Cancer When...1-100

1. You have syringes in your school locker
2. Your 6-year old brother does a show-and-tell about 'how my sister got her nasogastric tube out!' and gave the class a detailed description of how they insert it
3. You love school
4. You're on the way home from school on the train and you see a girl sitting across from you with a large mole on her face. You say to her, "You better get that checked out that looks malignant"
5. Most of your wardrobe consists of pajamas
6. You know more about the human body than your biology teacher
7. Your little brother wants to be an oncologist or a neurosurgeon when he grows up, not just 'a doctor'
8. You reset and flush your own drip
9. You feel at home when you walk into the hospital
10. You accidentally call one of the teachers, 'doctor'
11. You have a very big collection of hats and bandanas
12. You start to correct *Grey's Anatomy*, *House*, *Scrubs* and *ER* when they mispronounce a disease or procedure
13. You start to say 'I was only in hospital for a month'
14. You forget it's Christmas day
15. Last week's spelling test was written on the back of pathology results
16. You can swallow six pills at once without water
17. You have explained so many times about your illness and what's been happening that you just write it all down to give to people who ask
18. Your friends get sympathy nerve pain
19. Your mom reads "You Know You're the Parent of a Kid with Cancer When..." and she is in tears with laughter (it's the loudest I've ever heard her laugh!)
20. You puke on your bedroom floor and clean it up yourself
21. Vomit does not freak you out anymore
22. There is Tegaderm® wrappers all over your floor
23. You've watched so much television that you never want to watch it again
24. You carry around Microshield® everywhere you go
25. Your English teacher does a spelling test theme on medicine and you get them all correct
26. Your health teacher asks, "Can anyone give me some names of drugs that are legal or used for medical purposes?" and you can list off a few hundred.
27. You go out to lunch with your friends and you eat two sandwiches, a large milkshake, a cookie, a packet of chips and some jellies and are still hungry. Your friend hasn't even got through two bites of her sandwich yet. (Prednisolone!)
28. Your parents have bought you electronics that you hardly even use. (eg. Playstation 2, laptop, ipod, newer ipod and a Nintendo DS.) and they don't care
29. You walk around the hospital and know all the nurses
30. You bought a medical dictionary
31. After you use Emla® you have a numb limb
32. You start to realize who your real friends are
33. You touch a staircase at the mall and your mom urges you to wash your hands
34. People at your school assume you've left or you're pregnant
35. The hospital is so familiar to you, you could walk around with your eyes closed
36. All the flowers, cards and presents you get from people won't fit in your bag when you leave the hospital
37. The background picture on your phone is five bald

- people
38. You don't need to worry about shaving your legs any longer
 39. You don't worry about using mascara any more!
 40. You decorate your band-aids
 41. When you start to grow a little bit of hair, your mom goes and gets the camera and takes pictures of you and sends it to all your family members
 42. You have always wanted your hair to be curly and now, thanks to the chemo, it is!
 43. All the bookmarked pages on your internet are cancer websites
 44. You are so excited when you go out and buy your first bottle of hair conditioner and shampoo and your mom is crying!
 45. You can't —it's your first appointment in 12 months with the hairdresser
 46. You know everyone at the hospital so well that they are almost like family members
 47. You forget to put sun block on when walking outside the hospital on a cold winter's day and you end up being very burnt
 48. You're in the emergency department at 3:00am and you start explaining what's been happening to a resident and she says she doesn't understand what you're saying because you're using too many medical terms and that I should speak like a 15 year old.
 49. You love to flick through hairdressing magazines and look at the different hairstyles and you can't wait until you can style your hair
 50. When you walk out of the hospital for the first time after a long admission you think "Oh, is that what the outside world looks like?"
 51. On school vaccination day, people are crying their eyes out with fear and you're sitting there smiling.
 52. You don't know your way around school, but you know the hospital back to front
 53. You have developed so many allergies since chemo that you ask for "a hypoallergenic sandwich" at the local cafe
 54. The teachers at school do a 'drug search' through everyone's locker and bag and even though you have syringes, durogesic patches and other drugs, the teacher just laughs.
 55. You get so angry when you see someone smoking
 56. You celebrated your birthday in the hospital and they decorated the whole ward for you
 57. After discharge, you get up in the middle of the night at home and try to find your drip pole and unplug it so you can go to the bathroom
 58. Your main source of nutrition comes from iceypoles and mint chewing gum
 59. Your parents get mistaken for staff members
 60. You get sick of the plain flavor down your nasogastric tube, so you request chocolate or strawberry
 61. You are asked in school what the best invention made is; most people respond with 'computer' and 'mobile phone,' but you say 'Ondansteron®'
 62. At school you are referred to as 'the sick girl'
 63. You have been asked a billion times about whether or not drips hurt and what the hospital food is like
 64. Your little brother stands in front of the microwave while it's on and says, "Look Mom! I'm getting radiotherapy!"
 65. You get bored on weekends because there's no school
 66. The head of nursing on the oncology ward has a photo of you and her on her desk
 67. You have seen all the movies on the ward so many times you have memorized the scripts
 68. You pig out on food at lunchtime and you realize that a group of girls are looking at you in disgust. You smile at them and say "prednisolone"
 69. You come to school and a boy in your class says, "you smell like hospital"
 70. You can change your hair color, hair style and length everyday by buying different wigs
 71. You have no idea where the plates and bowls are kept in the kitchen at your house, but you know where everything is in the hospital kitchen
 72. You have caused your mom many grey hairs
 73. You search the internet each night to see if there have been any breakthrough treatments for cancer
 74. You are so used to sleeping in the hospital beds that it starts to feel kind of strange when you get back home in your own bed
 75. You love reading these sorts of lists, laughter is the best medicine (unless you have a stomach ache or are extremely queasy from chemo)
 76. You love to decorate the hospital
 77. A regular day for you includes medications, port and IV flushes, pathology results, doctor's calls and appointments and/or hospital admissions
 78. You have read inspirational stories about cancer for hours on end
 79. When people ask you where you went on the holidays you say "Boston Children's"

80. You can't remember how to do long division but you can calculate, measure and convert mls, mmls and mgs of meds
81. You have been in remission for a while so you apply for bench sitter for the school football team. The coach asks you "Are you taking any sort of illegal drugs, sleeping tablets, pain killers or steroids?" and you say "Yes, the last three ring a bell."
82. You make up jokes about cancer
83. The word "remission" is the sort of word that's said with the Hallelujah Chorus in the background
84. You have fainted at school (yet again) and your teachers ring an ambulance. The paramedics come in and say 'oh, you again!'
85. Your mom reads "You Know You're The Babysitter Of a Kid With Cancer When...." and says "We need her to come and baby-sit you!"
86. Your little sister goes up to a elderly bald man in the shopping mall and says "My brother has cancer *too!*"
87. You don't get asked to take off your hat in class anymore
88. Six of your friends have got their heads shaved for charity
89. Your little sister plays 'doctor' and she is trying to take her doll's temperture with an ear thermoetor from a non existant ear, and she gets angry when it says 'low'
90. You have watched almost all Disney movies and episodes of Blue's Clues...and you're 14...
91. The nurses have memorized your patient UR number
92. You're trying to put on weight rather than lose it
93. All your friends bought you hats for your birthday
94. You're pretty sure the people in radiology are sick of seeing you
95. Your essential beauty item is sunscreen
96. Your nasogastric tube and port have become a part of the anatomy
97. You have a very interesting "What I did on the holidays" school report
98. The last most glamorous thing you wore was sweat pants
99. You start to think if you didn't have cancer, you wouldn't be as strong a person as you are today
100. A 'big' meal for you is classified as a few jellies and an iceypole (unfortunately I haven't yet been started on prednisolone)