

Oncotype DX[®] - Maxine Gladwin's Experience



Maxine Gladwin was 47 and single mum to three teenage daughters when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. When her oncologist advised chemotherapy treatment, she was devastated - fearing it would impact her health, her job and her ability to provide for her family. With support from her family, a sample of Maxine's tumour was tested, using the Oncotype DX[®] Breast Recurrence Score Test. Maxine explains what happened next.

"I was 47 years old when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2014.

After a mastectomy, my oncologist recommended chemotherapy treatment, along with hormone therapy.

When my family raised concerns about chemotherapy, my oncologist told me about the Oncotype DX test. The cost of this test was well out of my reach, as I am a single parent with three teenage daughters.

My mother was with me at the consultation and she insisted on paying for it, because we were hoping I could avoid chemotherapy if it was safe.

It was such a relief when I got the results. I had a 3% chance of recurrence and I would not be any better off having chemo.

My Dad cried with relief when he heard. Because I am the sole breadwinner, I was terrified of losing my job and I really thought this could happen if I was

missing work for treatment.

I had contacted Centrelink prior to receiving my results and was advised that my entitlements would not even cover our rent, so our family could have been homeless.

Two of my girls were doing HSC at the time and moving them away from their school, family and friends would have been hugely disruptive.

Without Mum at my appointment, I would have just gone with chemotherapy.

It's terrible knowing that many women are going through unnecessary treatment.

I consider myself lucky. I am happy to report that five years after my diagnosis, I have had no cancer recurrence. My oldest daughter is married and is a manager for a travel agency, my two younger girls are nearly finished university degrees - one is studying to be a nurse and the other a social worker.

I don't know if any of this would have happened if I had just proceeded through treatment. Having an Oncotype test and getting the results I did, really changed my life."

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