

# **MEDICAL: Worse than I'd hoped, not as bad as it could be**

By Holly Lisle

I went from clear margins to dysplasia coming back in four months. The doc also found a white spot under my tongue that he says usually turns into an invasive form of cancer.

I was expecting the first news—I can feel this stuff on the inside, which most people can't. Pain in this instance was a gift for me—had I not had persistent pain, I would not have bothered to follow-up when my GP told me he couldn't see anything and he wasn't worried.

The second news was an unhappy shock.

Because treatment for this is 1) keep it from going to cancer, and 2) remove to clear margins, and clear margins didn't work out too well for me, he's recommended me to a guy he considers the go-to guy for the tough cases.

Didn't want to be a tough case, but here I am.

My dark side on this is:

1. **It has to be laser surgery**, which I have been told (and have researched) is hellish painful anywhere, and apparently just LOTS of fun on sensitive areas like the tongue.
2. In order to get to clear margins and then burn enough healthy tissue to prevent anything from ever growing there again, **I could lose a lot of my tongue.**
3. The surgery **could affect my ability to speak** clearly, or to speak at all.
4. There's **no guarantee** it won't come back, and this stuff

does not respond well to chemo or radiation.

Dark side in pretty dark.

### **Bright side isn't.**

I'm a writer. Live chats and webinars and podcasts and videos and the other stuff I've created over the years is cool, and I've loved doing it. But, bluntly, I don't have to be able to speak to work.

When I switched to Dvorak typing years ago, I eliminated my wrist pain. So for now, my hands and wrists are still good, and I can type easily.

I hold being alive as significantly more important than being attractive. My objective is still to live long enough to beat my great-grandmother's record. She lived to be 103, and I want to give her a run for her money. And I want to write fiction (and do some course creating) for the rest of my life.

The surgery gives me the opportunity to extend my life and keep the quality of it high.

So. I have an appointment to meet the new guy in a couple of weeks. He'll probably have to do his own biopsy. (Lots of pain, some downtime)

Then we'll schedule the surgery. (Hella pain, one month or more of downtime.)

The brightest spot for me, though, is that folks who have laser surgery for this issue have a high rate of no recurrence. That's the chance I'm shooting for.

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