



New Prostate Cancer Medications Extend And Improve Patients' Lives

TREATMENT OPTIONS When he was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer in 2011, Denis Moher decided to take a proactive approach to combating his disease.



Dr. Neil Fleshner MD, MPH, FRCSC

Head, Division of Urology, University Health Network



Denis Moher's proactive approach to combating prostate cancer is an inspiration to all Canadians. Here he is pictured with his wife Martha, and their three children, Marta (left), Olena (center), and Michael (right).

Denis Moher learned as much as possible about prostate cancer, even travelling as far as Texas to meet with experts in the field, and he adopted a healthy lifestyle.

Moher, 62, also started taking a medication that blocks the production of testosterone and other male hormones (called androgens), which stimulate the growth of prostate cancer cells. That kept the cancer in check until a month ago, when tests indicated the medication was no longer working.

He was diagnosed with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC), which occurs when the patient's cancer extends to other parts of his body and is able to spread despite initial hormonal therapy. His situation was dire.

Dr. Neil Fleshner, Chair of Urology at the University of Toronto and Chief of Urology at the University Health Network, prescribed a different anti-androgen medication — one that has been on the market for about two years. The results have been excellent.

Transforming treatment

"For the past 50 years we have been fighting a nuclear war with bows and arrows," says Fleshner. "But we are now moving ahead by leaps and bounds. The pace of discovery is dramatic." He attributes much of that success to what has been described as a molecular revolution.

Molecular testing is being used to diagnose and treat diseases more accurately, and at an earlier stage, while pharmaceutical companies are using molecular technologies to develop new drugs.

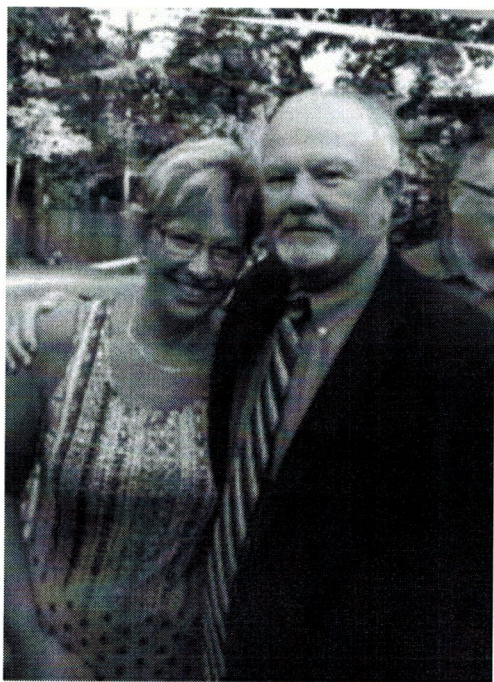
"Having a disease like this really changes your perspective. It makes you focus on what is important in life."

Not
only
do
these
new
drugs

extend life but they have relatively few side effects compared to their predecessors. As a result, patients taking this medication have a much better quality of life than anyone could have imagined just a few years ago.

Moher is a case in point. He has travelled abroad with his wife and friends and he does weight training for 90 minutes a day, six days a week. It's an intense workout that is similar in design to those followed by bodybuilders. Denis is much stronger now than he was before being diagnosed and has added considerable muscle mass — an exceptional feat given his testosterone deficiency.

Great



WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

*Denis Moher poses with his wife Martha.
Photo: Provided by Denis Moher*

expectations

"Not only has weight training improved my physical health but it has also been good for my mental health," says Moher. "I feel like I am doing something to improve my life. I don't feel as helpless as I would otherwise."

Moher now follows a diet that is almost entirely fat-free — "I've discovered kale chips," he says with a laugh — and embraces every moment of every day. "Having a disease like this really changes your perspective. It makes you focus on what is important in life."

Moher has nothing but praise for the health care providers he has encountered in this journey, from his family doctor to a urologist at St. Joseph's Health Centre to the prostate cancer specialists with the University Health Network, whom he describes as leaders in their field.

His experience has given him confidence about the future. "I'm waiting for the next big breakthrough," he says, "and I know there will be one."

RANDI DRUZIN, ca.editorial@mediaplanet.com

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