



# The Never-Ending Squirrel Tale

## You Know You're the Parent of a Kid with Cancer When...1-100

1. You carry a tube of Emla® in your purse instead a tube of lipstick
2. Kids with hair look kind of strange to you
3. You can sleep anywhere, and anything that reclines more than 15 degrees looks "comfy"
4. Your spouse asks what that sexy perfume is, and it's Betadine®
5. You don't realize the sharps container is on the kitchen table until half way through dinner
6. You enjoy the drive at 3:00am to emergency because there aren't any other cars on the freeway
7. You can name all the equipment used on ER
8. You can dx the patients on ER before the Docs do
9. You hear a truck backing up and you think the IV is beeping
10. You are so proud when your baby finally gets hair (and he is 8)!
11. Your new bathroom trash can has "Hazardous Waste" written on it (recycled sharps container)
12. You can maneuver a double pole with six boxes and a kid riding, on a tour of the hospital, and make it back to the room before the low-battery alarm sounds and the kid has to pee
13. You realize you've been home two weeks, and you're still measuring I's and O's
14. The nurses stop responding to the IV alarm, knowing you'll fix it anyway
15. Your child asks what's for dinner, and you automatically reach for the bag of hyperal
16. Your 2-year-old knows where all of the medical equipment goes, and how to use it
17. Your child's first word is a medical term
18. You keep a bag packed at all times like your 9½ months pregnant
19. You can eat with one hand while you hold the barf bucket with the other
20. Your child's bedroom looks like a Toys R Us® store
21. You ask your CPA if bribe toys are tax deductible
22. You correct the doctors spelling on the chemo meds
23. You can read the doctors prescription word for word, and are asked to decipher it by the pharmacist
24. You know medical terminology better than your family practitioner
25. There are 4 new Mercedes in the doctors' parking lot due to your child's payments
26. The pharmacy sends your family Christmas presents
27. You get excited when there is a 15% off sale at the pharmacy
28. The local needle program comes to your door
29. You have a syringe in your purse and you're not a diabetic
30. You have more meds in your cupboard than food
31. You can read your son's chart better than his nurse
32. You look like you're tan but it's really Betadine® stains
33. You and your hubby get matching stress tattoos for fun
34. You start teaching your daughter the parts of her body, and you point to her chest, and she says that's her port
35. None of the security guards on the pediatric floor ask for your ID anymore, and you're on first-name basis with the operating room staff
36. Medical students ask to borrow your notes
37. Your toddler refuses to sit on Santa's lap because he's too germy from all the other kids
38. You wrap presents and packages with medical tape

39. Your main source of nutrition comes from aspirin
40. Your child is more familiar with CT scan & bone scan pictures than the portrait studio!!!
41. When you use the term six-pack, you are talking about platelets, not Budweiser®
42. Your child is going on a field trip and wants to know if you have signed his "remission" slip
43. Your child can easily pronounce "Neuroblastoma," "chemotherapy" and "coagulate," but has trouble pronouncing the state you live in
44. Your child uses Legos® to build "MRI" machines
45. You don't have to ask, "What's that mean" to the previous 44 items
46. You hear yourself say the words, "I'll buy you anything you want" at least twice a month
47. You know you are the friend of a family with a child with cancer when you call to check the chemo schedule and ask, "How will her counts be on, say, the 11th?" before you schedule a birthday party
48. You have been asked by more than 25 friends and family members, "So, when is his next treatment?"
49. Your four year old's critique of the medical student's examination skills is the same as the supervising physician's
50. A younger sibling identifies a nipple as "my port site"
51. Your daughter has more Beanie Babies in her room than the specialty store in the mall
52. You really think this list is funny, when most normal people either don't get it or start to cry!
53. When your seven year old begins to sound like Doogie Howser, MD
54. You give out barf buckets as birthday party favors
55. When a Radio Flyer® wagon is considered an essential transportation device
56. When you walk down the hall in your house holding your baby and feel odd because you're not trailing an IV pole with the other hand
57. When the siblings want to know what the child's counts are to see if they can go inside and eat at McDonald's
58. You think nothing of taking your 3 year old into a department store in his underwear because he has thrown up on his last set of clothes and you are an hour away from home and have an important doctor's appointment
59. Six months after treatment ends and the hair starts to grow back someone stops you in the grocery store and says, "I just love her haircut. Where did you get it done?"
60. When you send copies of this list to all your cancer-parent friends
61. When your idea of funny is to ask, "Where's your line?" and then giggle while your toddler takes off all of her clothes looking for it—even though you know it has just been removed
62. You can reset the IV machines overnight, in your sleep, every 30 minutes without waking up once and still call it a good nights sleep!!!
63. You have a kid who did not wake up by 5 AM on Christmas morning
64. Your kid takes more pills than you
65. When you say "Get up and smell the coffee" your kid says "The coffee's going to make me puke"
66. When your kid asks for a Happy Meal® you don't say, "Wait until we get home to eat." Rather, "Really?" (unless of course your kid is on prednisone, when you say, "A Happy Meal or a Super-Sized Value Meal?")
67. Your best friend buys you a relaxation tape for your birthday and you swear it doesn't work right
68. You cannot try aroma therapy for yourself because the smells trigger nausea in your kid
69. Your kid wears out a pair of Nikes® pushing an IV pole around the hospital during BMT recovery
70. The "CK" on your tee shirt stands for *Chemo Kid*, not Calvin Klein®
71. You make Jell-O® with Pedialite®
72. You draw smiley-faces on your isolation masks
73. Your kid has received enough get-well cards to fuel a small bon-fire
74. Your child receives soooo many toys while in the hospital that at Christmas time that you can now open your own toy store
75. When you are thankful for steroids because there will not be turkey leftovers after the Thanksgiving meal
76. Every little thing can make you cry in a heartbeat, but this list, on the other hand, has you rolling on the floor!
77. When your child is ecstatic because all she's getting is counts from her arm and a shot in her leg (Now **that's** a good day on the chemo ward!)
78. You can tell the nurses where their supplies are
79. When you can whip up a seven-course meal in minutes for a six-year old having a prednisone pig out
80. When your child tackles you screaming, "I'm

- starving to death! Why won't you feed me?!" in public and you can laugh instead of scolding them for their manners
81. You can make a variety of arts and crafts out of hospital supplies: isolation masks become turtles and spinal fluid tubes filled with glitter and baby oil make great key chains
  82. When the doctor *finally* enters the examination room and finds you and your child with latex glove powder around your mouth from blowing up the gloves
  83. The nurses and techs call out, "see you next week!" with true joy knowing that you will pass on all the get-well candy ("No way I can eat that, I'll throw up!") and the leftover "bribe-sicles" that you couldn't get her to eat
  84. When it's time for your 2 year to have her vital signs taken and she lifts her arm and sticks out her leg, without crying or fighting you
  85. Your child names pills after superheroes
  86. When you are helping your daughter, the sibling, pull her hair into a ponytail and she says, "Look at my forehead, I have great veins there don't I? If I ever need to get a shot, I could get it there!"
  87. When you have a collection of "throw-up buckets" in every room of your house!
  88. At dinner your, one son refers to ketchup as blood and the son with ALL corrects him because blood is a darker red.
  89. The local small town emergency room calls you at home and asks what size huber needles to stock in case they have to access your child's port and then ask if you could inservice them.
  90. The guys use vial tops instead of poker chips on poker night
  91. When you think that anything that your child will eat and keep down is a "nutritious meal", even if it is chocolate cookies and candy
  92. Your two-year old learns his colors from all the pills he has to take!
  93. All your body lotion and tattoo bandaids are gone because the doll needed Emla<sup>®</sup> too!
  94. When all the other boys in the seventh grade shave thier heads to look as cool as your son.
  95. When your 6 year old is making appointments for the nursing staff to do their manicures, because the love her nail art.
  96. A wing of the pharmacy is now dedicated to your family.
  97. Training for the New York City Marathon consists of laps around the Pediatric Oncology Ward with your kid in her wheel chair.
  98. When your child has done all of the puzzles in the play room at the hospital so many times that she/he can now do them in five minutes with the pieces upside down.
  99. Your 2 year old (with a chest port) points to your left breast and says with confidence to the oncologist: "That's Mommy's owie!"
  100. Your child has his/her own website to keep family and friends updated on his/her progress because calling everyone gets to be too expensive and repeating the report over and over is tiring.