



# The Never-Ending Squirrel Tale

## You Know You're the Parent of a Kid with Cancer When...200

101. You read "You Know You're the *Babysitter* of a Kid With Cancer and you immediately begin a search on the net trying to track her down...
102. You swing past the video store to pick up some entertainment for you son while he has a "quick" blood transfusion
103. You hear yourself say "just because you have cancer does not mean you can be rude" and you don't feel bad about it.
104. You have a bottle of Purel® in every handbag and use it after riding on the escalator.
105. When asked which kid on the playground is yours, you reply "the bald one."
106. You get excited when your child gets head lice
107. When, at 4 am, you begin to wonder if your 4-month old daughter is Houdini reincarnated due to the amazing sleight-of-hand she uses to wiggle out of her mittens and grab her NG tube.
108. Your child has only thrown up twice and you smile with satisfaction at what a good day she had.
109. The hospital nursing staff asks you to train the new nurses/techs on when and how to accomplish dressing changes and flushing tubes.
110. Your two year old has been out of the hospital for a week and begs to watch a "Doctor movie" on TV because it feels like home.
111. Your child is so used to staying in the hospital that she sleeps all night there and wakes up in her own bed at home because she doesn't feel comfortable.
112. Your child lovingly hugs or kisses anyone in a white lab coat.
113. Your two year old can correct a nurse when they forget to change the caps of their tubes.
114. You child feel naked or lonely without their IV pole.
115. You're happy that your child has awakened you at 2 in the morning asking for meatloaf ...
116. You take your son to his favorite restaurant in a last-ditch effort to get him to eat. After 2 bites he says, "It's good Mom, just not good enough to eat."
117. Your child's baby doll is named after her favorite craving: Pickle.
118. Your 2½ year old will only potty train in the hospital.
119. You'll even raid your friend's fridge while visiting because of steroids
120. A year after treatments stop you find the emergency overnight bag in the back of the car— it's filled with clothes that don't fit anymore.
121. Your parking & toll receipts for doctor & hospital visits are fully deductible on the 1040 long form.
122. A year after dx, your other child exhibits the same symptoms as your CK and you thank God that it's only mono.
123. You have the Pediatric ER and the Hematology/ Oncology Clinic's phone number's programmed as a speed dial numbers in your cell phone.
124. Your child believes Boost® is more medicine he needs to take
125. When the siblings think mommy's new home is the Ronald McDonald House and your child with cancer now lives in the hospital.
126. Your most restful sleep is the ten minutes you spent waiting in the hospital cafeteria line.
127. "The lambs are still there after many years or so it seems!" (Please put this in there; it's an inside joke at our hospital!!!!)
128. You walk into your child's room and find a trail of vomit, and you are thankful that he kept on playing
129. Your kid is known as the "kid with the 'brown head'"

- because he refused to wear lotion or a hat and it is very tan.
130. You use a cart to get all of the changes of clothes, toys, and favorite food into the hospital on admission days.
  131. You learn to read x-ray films as good as the radiologist and can recall lab values for the past two months without looking at the chart.
  132. Your child wants a Band-aid® first thing because that means he can go home
  133. You look for the nutritional value of cookies
  134. You fill empty 10cc syringes (from saline flushes for Broviac®) with pancake syrup so you can transport it along with pancakes to an early morning Drs. appointment so your child can have breakfast while being transfused!
  135. You know you're a SISTER of a child with cancer when your little sister draws on her bald head with markers...
  136. The old phrase, "bald is beautiful," takes on a whole new meaning...
  137. Your son asks, "Who am I having therapy with today?"
  138. You start to cry when after three years of chemotherapy, your child's baby sister tells perfect strangers, "My sister doesn't have chemo anymore!"
  139. You receive your "Children's Art Project" catalog in the mail and you and your child personally know the kids in the pictures!
  140. You are taking pictures of that momentous first haircut since your 12 year old's hair grew back, and you have to explain that he hasn't had a cut in over a year!
  141. Your nine-year old daughter accidentally takes her IV pole for a walk around the ward even though she is not connected.
  142. You can hook up a feeding pump with your eyes closed.
  143. You can laugh and cry, at the same, time while reading this list.
  144. You notice that when you go to the hospital that they have been redecorating and you were just there last week.
  145. You put another bed in your room for your child.
  146. Your 4-year old can take his own temperature and does a good job!
  147. All the kids in the neighborhood are having water fights with syringes.
  148. When a common question between parents is, "So, what are you in for?"
  149. When your 7-year old thinks all kids his/her age lose their hair, have ports, and get chemo.
  150. When you feel more at home in the ER than the new doctor does.
  151. When your child turns in homework with medical tape on it.
  152. When, at home, you try to dial "9" to get an outside line.
  153. After months of struggling with a Kangaroo pump, a stranger says, "What a chubby baby you have!"
  154. You're overjoyed when someone comments on what long eyelashes your baby has, and you know it's his second set.
  155. Upon holding your child, someone tells you, "He has something down his shirt."
  156. Your 4-year-old tells her friends, "My brother is special, he's neutropenic!"
  157. You have a panic attack each time you pass through the fresh flower section of your local supermarket.
  158. You show those pictures to friends and family without blinking an eye, while they all get queasy.
  159. Your child's photo album includes pictures of before, during, and after surgery.
  160. You're making twice as many trips to the grocery store cause your kid's on prednisone
  161. You explain to your teen daughter that the hospital is not a hotel and the nurse at the front desk is not her private secretary for personal calls.
  162. You have your own private collection of scrubs & footies in every color.
  163. Your 5 year old brings in her broviac® (that was recently removed) in a urine specimen container to school for show and tell.
  164. People in supermarkets are looking closely trying to figure out whether your child is male or female
  165. At the restaurant, your child circles his meal selection on the menu and hands it back to the waiter.
  166. You go to a restaurant and REQUEST the table closest to the bathroom.
  167. Your child's a teddy bear and stuffed cat have their hair cut off **and** they're sporting a broviac® and IV
  168. When you bring your 8-year old son to the salon to get his hair dyed blue you bring pictures of him bald so they don't think you are a strange parent ...
  169. You remember to grab the puke bucket when discharged because it is useful for cleaning supplies

170. When school sends home a letter about head lice and there's no need to check your child's head—they're already bald!
171. When you start carrying your 9-year old up the steps to go to the bathroom.
172. It's 7:55pm and the local grocery store closes at 8:00pm. You live 5 minutes away and your child—who is at the weight needed to start IV nutrition—says he is hungry for chips and dip. So you run to the store and as they are mopping the floor, you *beg* them to please check you through.
173. Also after driving 100 miles a day for 30 days for radiation, your child looks at you and tells you that you are no longer his mother, you are his chauffeur.
174. Your two-year old kisses all her medicines, her BP cuff and thermometer.
175. Two years after treatment stops and you see this list and your old entries still make you smile with tears when you read them.
176. When you've cried so much in front of your 5-yr old cancer kid that, without any change of expression, he calmly asks you "are you crying now because you're mad, because you're sad or because you're happy?"
177. You can drive down the interstate with one hand and hold the puke bucket for your child in the backseat...and still never have to pull over.
178. When you are proud of your 4 yr old who tells the surgery staff, "I want bubble gum flavored gas, I use blow by oxygen, and take the IV out before I wake up. And if this takes more than 15 min. I'm coming after you."
179. When you mistakenly put the Emla<sup>®</sup> cream on your tooth brush. Yuck!
180. When your child would rather stay inside and eat than go outside and play.
181. You find yourself at Taco Bell at 10:30 a.m. ordering tacos and hot sauce.
182. The 5 year old girl wants to play with YOUR hair instead of wanting you to play with hers.
183. When your bald 4-year-old goes up to people smoking at the airport and calmly says, "Chemotherapy makes you barf," and you don't die of embarrassment or scold them for talking to strangers.
184. You're filling syringes on Halloween night and you're NOT psycho.
185. Your midwife gives you the "birth kit" list for your next baby and you have every supply listed in mass quantities.
186. When your son asks "So, where do I get my shot today?"
187. You are so anxious to get the morning meds out of the way, you reach for the wrong kid—the one that isn't sick and push the syringe of Diflucan<sup>®</sup> into her mouth. She then stands there looking at you, crying, and saying "Mom, that is not mine."
188. Your two year old comes into the kitchen to get the Lysol<sup>®</sup> spray bottle and tells you he's "going to clean my room."
189. Your 2½ year old asks you to order "heparin and sausage pizza" instead of pepperoni and sausage pizza at 8:00 in the morning.
190. Defending the nurses aid and the janitor to the new doctor (a Fellow): "This is the career you chose, you'll just have to get used to the smell in this ward/clinic. Everyone here smells like that. They are children, and yes they are ill!"
191. Your kids break into hysterics every time you tell them to fetch you the stool because they know it's another word for "poop."
192. The cat barfs on the floor and your little one scolds him for not doing it in the basin.
193. Your other kids fall and scrape their knees and a Band-Aid<sup>®</sup> is not enough anymore...they want EMLA<sup>®</sup> and a Tegaderm<sup>®</sup>, too!
194. The mailman delivers the mail to your door every day because your daughter has so many cards and packages from her Chemo Angels that they won't fit in the box.
195. When the new resident, in an effort to be friendly, asks your kid where she lives and she replies with a serious face, "Here."
196. Your 6-year-old daughter has to cancel a meeting with the Make-A-Wish<sup>®</sup> lady because she's cutting her last molar and has to go to the hospital for a platelet transfusion.
197. You can joke about the fact that your child has cancer
198. Your compassion is little to non-existent to people whose children have had, say, a hernia repair.
199. Your child is reaching celebrity status from all of the newspaper and television appearances.
200. When your two year old goes up to strangers in the mall, lifts his shirt saying "Look, no tubies," and you softly chuckle and explain while the poor victims are horrified at the war wounds present on the belly they see.