



The Never-Ending Squirrel Tale

You Know You're the Parent of a Kid with Cancer When...400

301. When drawing a smiley face on daddy's tummy with the iodine stick (from the preps for accessing a port) feels like an ordinary day.
302. Your kids think the song "BINGO" is sung "B-I-N-P-O, B-I-N-P-O, B-I-N-P-O, & Binpo was his name-oh."
303. When you ask your child what she wants for Christmas and she answers "a box."
304. You know how to get out blood, betadine®, and fenretinide® stains, but when a crayon makes it into the dryer you're stumped.
305. You see your child's chart while waiting for a CT and it's 4" thick with "Vol II" written on it.
306. You get lost driving to your mother's house but know the quickest route, most scenic route and best bad weather route to Children's Hospital
307. When you don't remember how to use a blow dryer but can reset an IV with your eyes closed
308. Your child says "You can't get mad at me I have cancer."
309. You know the hospital's phone number by heart or have it on speed dial.
310. Your child becomes a human cart in the mall when riding in a wheelchair.
311. You have a box full of free things people give your child when they're bald
312. Waiting for a hour for someone doesn't seem long at all compared to doctor appointments.
313. Your child know about how much pee they went from always peeing in a hat.
314. Med students ask to use your records
315. You carry a thermometer in your purse just in case.
316. You've seen the whole movie list at the hospital.
317. You have more hospital booties than socks.
318. You live out of a suit case
319. You have to vacuum off your child's pillow when their hair starts falling out.
320. Your child's bed is too filled to sleep in because of all the stuffed animals.
321. When you use one of your son's empty syringes to decorate your daughter's birthday cake.
322. When you're as excited about your child's broviac® coming out as you are about his first steps.
323. Your have a set limit on how many times a day your CK can use the "because-I-have-cancer" excuse.
324. Your child plays a peculiar new game with her friends: the one with the most scars wins!
325. Your child uses the excuse "because I have cancer" to get what he wants and you answer back with "You'll have to do better than that!"
326. When the holidays roll around and you find yourself making up new versions of old favorites, such as "I'm Gettin' Chemo for Christmas."
327. When your post-transplant son has a countdown and a list of the places he is going out to eat at when the broviac® comes out and he hits 180 days.
328. When you never look at a French fry container without thinking of a barf bucket...
329. You ask radiology for a copy of your daughters glowing bone scan to use for Halloween pictures.
330. Your daughter learns to count by the floor numbers in the hospital parking garage.
331. You park on the top floor, outside, of the parking garage so if it rains while she is admitted your car will get clean
332. Your daughter looks forward to being in the hospital before Christmas because then she doesn't have to spend her own money to buy her brothers and sister presents: she just recycles!

- 333.You're actually excited that your teenager is "pushing boundaries" because you know that means she's feeling better; e.g., her "counts" are up!
- 334.Instead of "Daddy," your baby's first word is *Doctor*
- 335.When you call the doctor and tell him to prescribe a certain med because you've already diagnosed your own child. Been there way too many times.
- 336>Your sense of time revolves around nurse shifts
- 337.Fund raising T-shirts have your family's picture
- 338>Your daughter's hair is on its 3rd new color ... again!
- 339.The ER staff asks what floor you're working on now.
- 340.You are no longer kind when the nurse does not remember to do exactly the routine your cancer kid outlined while being stuck for labs....and you write up the nurse that forgot to send the labs in for an hour "because there was no tube."
- 341.You share friends addresses all over the country with the resident that is graduating and doing her Fellowship, and you remember the day she began her residency!!! And had your child to practice on!
- 342.You find out that your child is partially deaf due to a life-saving antibiotic he received during therapy and you're relieved that "that's all" that's wrong with him.
- 343>Your friends and neighbors come to you for medical advice about their own kids before calling their doctor.
- 344.When you fix 2 extra plates for dinner so your child can have thirds and your dog won't be left out.
- 345.When the cook at the All-You-Can-Eat Buffet comes out to see the "child" who won't stop and then wants to take a picture with them.
- 346.When a stranger tells your child her hair looks so cute that way and she responds, "Thanks...it was done by chemo!"
- 347>Your child wants chocolate cake at 1:30 am and you are so grateful that you are in Manhattan and able to get it
- 348.Bingo night becomes the highlight of your social calendar
- 349.When you can't go to the grocery store until you know blood counts
- 350.You know you're a TEENAGER with cancer when your boyfriend likes to kiss the top of your bald head, and is upset when your hair starts to grow back. :-)
- 351.When you buy your dog bone marrow flavored dog treats and your cancer kid gives him one saying innocently, "Here puppy, come and get your bone marrow transplant."
- 352.When you use your son's syringe to baste your Easter ham.
- 353.When your son's science project is, "How Chemotherapy Affects the Bone Marrow."
- 354.When your teenager daughter relapses and you are sitting there crying your eyes out and she says, "look at it this way mom...you'll get lots of cross stitching done again."
- 355.When your advice to your teenager is to, "Just say NO to drugs" because he's had plenty of the best while on chemo when he was eleven!
- 356.You spend three extra days in the hospital, and endure extra blood cultures and chest X-rays, for "a fever of unknown origin" that turns out to be due to CUTTING A TOOTH, like every other one-year old is doing.
- 357>Your Oncologist is helping you encourage your 12 month old to begin eating for the first time ever and suggests food like "sorbet, maybe chocolate, or anything with a lot of salt."
- 358.When your son, who has finally completed chemo, comes in after playing hard and you are happy that he has grass stains.
- 359.When your daughter orders two kids meals, side salad and a drink and *then* asks what her sister and you want. Even worse, when she goes back for ice cream and cookies.
- 360.You're no longer embarrassed when your 5-year old tells strangers that if they keep smoking they can have a mediport® just like hers...
- 361>Your child throws up at the dinner table and the other kids don't skip a beat ... they continue eating
- 362>Your 3-year old fills her own syringe *and* gives it to herself too!
- 363.When you buy frozen dinners—all the same flavor—by the case because that is all your child will eat.
- 364>Your 6-year old son is upset that he did NOT have a spinal tap because his counts are too low—he had his mind set on that Supersoaker® in the toy (treasure) chest...
- 365.You write down your child's name on the sign-in sheet, but the appointment was for you.
- 366.You have a newfound appreciation for your bald headed men friends—your "haired" friends just don't understand.
- 367>Your Christmas card list has more doctors and nurses on it than family and friends.

368. Your 3-year old takes his first port to show-and-tell day at preschool.
369. Your 3-year old son leads a pack of Children's Miracle Network on a tour of the hospital, stops everyone in front of the peds specialty clinic and says, "And that's where I live."
370. You have to take away your 2-year old's Fisher Price® medical play kit because she gets frustrated when she can't get the cuff to give her a "hug" and the needle doesn't screw into the broviac®.
371. Your child keeps stealing the salt shaker because nothing is salty enough.
372. You schedule an overnight chemo treatment for your 4-year old on a weekend in order for daddy not to have to take a vacation day from work, and you consider it a "family weekend getaway" (no laundry or yard work at the hospital!).
373. Your child's stuffed animal has a straw taped to its chest so "he can have his own Hickman, just like me!" (This animal has also had IV's, GCSF shots...you name it!)
374. Your 5 year old tells his kindergarten teacher he can teach her the step-by-step procedure for a spinal tap
375. After being bald for so long, your child declares she needs a hair cut when it gets to be about a half-inch long!
376. When you write a letter to your older son's teacher start out, "He is our hero; without his bone marrow, his little brother wouldn't be here." I didn't think that would be something I would ever have to write about my son! (two years ago)
377. When your child's teacher lets you know for show and tell that your daughter took off her shirt to show her port and discussed how meds and needles go in in full details (and she wants to bring in pictures taken by the nurses).
378. Your kindergartener tells his teacher he can teach her the step by step procedure for a spinal tap.
379. You keep a urinal in your car for your son's emergency bathroom stops that cannot wait for a bathroom after 2 hours of hydration before chemo. (Happens *every time*, even after he's already gone at least 6 times while in clinic!)
380. When you have your own parking spot at the hospital.
381. When your 8 year old shaves all her Barbie's hair off and christens her "Chemo Barbie."
382. When you go for a haircut and your little one picks up the snips from the floor to place hair on her head
383. When someone asks your daughter if she tried to cut her own hair and she replies, "No, the drugs cut it that way."
384. When your child cuts all the hair off her favorite doll (which you went nuts to get cause it looked just like her) so they can still be twins.
385. When your 6-year old comes home from school saying, "Mom, it was my lucky day! Everyone had to be tested for lice but me—and I heard it really hurt!" Being bald does have a few positives, I'm glad Sam could find one.
386. The minute you get home, you plant yourself at the computer for at least an hour to check all the kids' pages for updates instead of your email, the weather, or the news.
387. When nothing else is handy, you cup your hands to catch your child's puke--without a second thought.
388. Our teenage daughter gets excited when her counts are high enough not to have to wear a mask.
389. Someone asks your daughter if she tried to cut her own hair and she replies, "No, the drugs cut it that way."
390. You assume anyone with a bald head has cancer!
391. You resent kids who shave their heads to look "cool."
392. Your 4-year old has more movies in his collection than a video store.
393. Your day revolves around heperin® shots.
394. Your child asks for the flush...that you forgot.
395. Your five year old is happy she doesn't have to sit to pee (as long as she empties her ostomy bag before it starts to leak).
396. Besides all your personal belongings, you need to take 25 video tapes from home even when there's two closets full of them at the hospital.
397. Your 4-year old still thinks she can cut in the front of the line because "she has cancer," and thinks she's still at Disney World on the Make-a-Wish trip.
398. Your newborn is scared of you and you're the MOM—the grandparents know more about him than you.
399. Telling the nice night nurse not to worry about getting her urine amounts every two hours; I'll have the total amount measured for her in the morning along with every-hour temps.
400. No matter where you are in your house you can always find an alcohol wipe laying around