



Department
Radiation

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Home > Ron Goodrich Story

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Ron was 60 years old in 2007 when he noticed some discomfort in his left ear on vacation in Hawaii. He thought this might be related to his water skiing, a lifelong avocation, but did have his PCP evaluate him when he returned home to Novato, CA. The initial finding was earwax build-up.

A few weeks later, Ron noticed a lump in the left neck. This seemed to get a bit smaller after a 10-day course of antibiotics, but wouldn't completely go away. Then additional tests were done, including a neck ultrasound, which showed what appeared to be a benign cyst. A CT scan of the neck was also done in Marin, CA, which showed two neck lumps as well as another mass at the base of the tongue.

After two fine needle aspiration biopsies of the neck masses were not helpful, Ron was referred to an ENT doctor for further evaluation. That doctor confirmed the presence of a tongue mass and neck node and took Ron to the operating room for further evaluation and more biopsies. This confirmed that there was a poorly differentiated squamous cancer arising from the base of the tongue and spreading to lymph nodes in the neck (the neck lumps). The ENT doctor then referred Ron to UCSF for definitive treatment. Because of the extent of the tumor, Ron was found to be an excellent candidate for radiation using intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) [1], and chemotherapy.

Cancer arising in the tongue base is known as an oropharyngeal cancer, likely related to the human papilloma virus, which has been linked with this type of cancer. This is often very responsive to radiation and very curable. Newer computerized techniques, called ?IMRT?, developed at UCSF were employed, along with chemotherapy, to spare salivary glands and minimize the risk of injury of other adjacent normal tissues. The goal was to cure the cancer while minimizing the side-effects, which can linger long after the completion of therapy. Happily, as you can see from the video, the mission was accomplished. Ron is able to enjoy his life to the fullest and continue what he loves to do!

Ron Goodrich Story ^[2] from Radiation Oncology at UCSF ^[3] on Vimeo ^[4].

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Links

[1] <https://radonc.ucsf.edu/intensity-modulated-radiation-therapy-imrt>

[2] <https://vimeo.com/146194837>

[3] <https://vimeo.com/user42991980>

[4] <https://vimeo.com>