

J25 Autoimmune Pancreatitis

June 2009

Intro: This is a story about beating the odds. The woman you're about to meet was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and told she had months to live. But before she had major surgery and chemotherapy to try to keep the devastating disease at bay, she got a second opinion. A new diagnosis with the promise of life.

Video

Total running time 1:55

CG :09 to :13

Ning Chien

Audio

BAKERY TREATS SHARED WITH HER FAMILY. NING CHIEN SAVORS THIS SIMPLE PLEASURE BECAUSE SHE HAS BEEN FREED FROM A DIAGNOSIS OF PANCREATIC CANCER.

“THE SKY IS SO BLUE AND THE AIR WAS SO FRESH.”

NING HAD A CONDITION THAT MIMICS PANCREATIC CANCER. SHE HAD ABDOMINAL PAIN AND SHE LOST WEIGHT. A CT SCAN SHOWED MASSES ON HER PANCREAS WITH POTENTIAL SPREAD TO HER LIVER. THINGS LOOKED GRIM.

CG :26 to :34

Ming Sun

Ning's daughter

“MY MOM IS THE ROCK OF OUR FAMILY. LIKE MOST MOTHERS ARE, AND WE COULDN'T IMAGINE NOT HAVING HER WITH US.”

NING'S HOMETOWN DOCTOR TOLD HER TO GET HER THINGS IN ORDER, AS THE SUSPECTED CANCER WOULD LIKELY TAKE HER WITHIN MONTHS. SHE FACED MAJOR SURGERY TO CONFIRM THAT DIAGNOSIS. BUT NING AND HER FAMILY WANTED A SECOND OPINION

“IN MY HEART I WAS NOT CONVINCED.”

GRASPING FOR HOPE, FOR A CHANCE AT LIFE, NING WENT TO MAYO CLINIC WHERE SHE MET DR. SANTHI VEGE.

CG :58 to 1:10

Santhi Vege, M.D.

Mayo Clinic

“I TOLD THE PATIENT AND THE DOCTOR WHILE THIS LOOKS LIKE PANCREATIC CANCER WITH SPREAD TO THE LIVER AS YOU

Standup
CG 1:11 to 1:21
Vivien Williams
Reporting

HAVE BEEN TOLD, THERE IS A
SMALL POSSIBILITY THAT THIS
COULD BE AUTOIMMUNE
PANCREATITIS IN WHICH CASE WE
WOULD BE THRILLED.”

AUTOIMMUNE PANCREATITIS IS A
RARE, BUT BENIGN CONDITION
CAUSED BY YOUR IMMUNE
SYSTEM ATTACKING THE
PANCREAS. IT CAN CAUSE MASSES
THAT LOOK LIKE CANCER.

A TISSUE BIOPSY AND
SPECIALIZED BLOOD TESTS
CONFIRMED THAT NING DID NOT
HAVE CANCER, BUT AUTOIMMUNE
PANCREATITIS. NING’S DAUGHTER
SAYS, AFTER WEEKS OF
PREPARING FOR THE WORST,
THEY WERE STUNNED WHEN THEY
HEARD THE NEWS.

“WE MUST HAVE HAD VERY BLANK
EXPRESSIONS BECAUSE DR. VEGE
SAID, ‘I THINK I WOULD BE A LITTLE

HAPPIER THAN WHAT YOU SEEM.”
IN FACT THEY WERE OVER JOYED.
NO CANCER. AND TREATMENT?
“35 MILLIGRAMS OF PREDNISONE
FOR 30 DAYS. AS A CURE!”
AND TIME TO SAVOR SIMPLE
PLEASURES. FOR MEDICAL EDGE,
I’M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

Autoimmune pancreatitis is relatively rare. Ning said that she was cured, but the disease sometimes flares up and in that case she’ll need additional medication. For more information on this condition and pancreatic cancer, visit our Website at... [STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.mayoclinic.org> or voice tag "mayoclinic.org" for more information.]