

Matt's Update

As of today, 11/23/08, Matt is back home.

Since the last update on September 24th, here's what's been going on with Matt:

On September 29, Matt was released from Stanford, after he and Irene spent 6 days there.

On October 2nd, Matt started oral chemo and was scheduled to have this for 21 days. This is usually done with a pill, but the pill was too big, so Irene had it changed to liquid form. This was the 2nd part of his 3rd round of chemo (Cycle B). Matt was only able to tolerate 13 of the 21 treatments. This type of chemo, really messed him up.

On October 23rd, Matt had a sonogram, to make sure everything looked OK inside his stomach. Everything seemed to be OK. Stanford wanted to replace Matt's Gtube (feeding tube), but was unable to, because it was attached to the inside of his stomach lining. Since they were unable to replace the tube easily, Stanford set up a date to remove it surgically. While Matt was at Stanford, Jake (Child life specialist) came to Matt's room and asked him if he wanted tickets to the 49ers vs. Seahawks game. Matt obviously said yes, so Jake gave Matt four tickets.

On October 26th, Matt, Brother Mike, Matt's friend Adrian and Matt's Dad went to the game. We had a great time and want to thank Jake, for the tickets.

On October 27th, Matt had his 4th round of chemo. This was cycle A again. This round went fine and Matt was released on the 29th.

On October 31st (Halloween) Matt woke up to a bad infection, so Irene took him in to Matt's pediatrician. Matt was put on antibiotics for 10 days. Matt was able to dress up and go trick or treating with his friends. Matt didn't get any candy, he didn't feel like it, since he doesn't eat any.

On November 4th, Matt had to go back to Stanford for lab work and his 2nd part of his 4th round of chemo. Irene and Matt usually leave early in the morning for this part and get home that night. This was the case this time as well, but when they got home, Matt accidentally stepped on his feeding tube and pulled his Gtube out of his stomach. This was very scary for all of us and we all panicked. It was now 11:00 at night and Irene and Matt just came off a 15 hour road trip, from Stanford. When we called Stanford, they wanted us to come back right then. There was no way Irene could have made the trip back and Greg was sick in bed. We had Stanford call Sonora and Irene and Matt heading to the ER at Sonora. Sonora was able to place the tube back and then shot a dye in Matt's stomach and did an x-ray, to make sure it was in the right location. Matt and Irene got home around 2:30 in the morning. The only good thing that came out of this, is now Stanford doesn't have to surgically replace the tube, Matt says he took care of this himself.

On November 12th, Matt headed back to Stanford, for his 3rd part of his 4th round of chemo. Stanford took labs and when they came back, Matt's counts were low again, so they gave him a red blood transfusion as well (2 units). Matt and Irene heading home that night.

On November 13th (the very next day), Matt spiked a fever and Irene and Matt had to go to the hospital in Sonora. They stayed in Sonora for a few hours and Sonora sent them back to Stanford. This time, Matt had to take an ambulance to Stanford, since he was in critical condition. Stanford treated the high fever and monitored Matt for a while. What we thought was going to be a few days, turned into 6 days at Stanford. Matt got another red blood transfusion and they headed home.

On November 16th, Matt had his one year anniversary, with his girlfriend Candace. This was also Irene's birthday. Since Matt and Irene were at Stanford, they celebrated Irene's birthday at the hospital.

After Matt and Irene got home, we all went out for dinner, to celebrate Irene's birthday. Matt and Candace celebrated their anniversary last night, here at the house.

Matt is still not eating much regular food; he's still having a hard time with this. He's still feeding through the tube about 16 hours a day.

Matt is scheduled to go back to Stanford on December 7th for another MRI and his 5th round (Cycle A) of chemo.

Matt receives Cycle A and Cycle B chemo rounds. Cycle A has three parts, which means three trips to Stanford, three weeks in a row. Cycle B has two parts, which means one trip to Stanford and 21 days of oral chemo at home. Matt is scheduled to have (6) A cycles and (3) B cycles. Matt has completed (3) A cycles and (1) B cycle so far, so he's almost halfway through. Matt should be done with chemo, at the end of April 09'.

Matt wants to thank everyone for all their support and encouraging comments. He says he's doing OK and will fight this thing to the end.

Thanks for checking in and for all your love and support,

The McCullough Family