



April. Bowel Cancer Awareness month.

My goodness do we need to try and raise awareness of this disease. One of the biggest challenges is that no one wants to talk about their bowel movements. Poo is not considered polite conversation!

The simple fact is that by raising awareness and talking about something, over time you start to “normalise” the topic. And that can be a really positive thing in the efforts to reduce the number of people being diagnosed, and to crucially get people diagnosed early. Bowel Cancer, caught early enough, has a 95% chance of being cured.

My journey has been a long one, I noticed blood in my poo and just assumed I had been eating too much red meat and drinking too much red wine! However, I went to my GP who sent me for a colonoscopy, and then discovered I had bowel cancer. We did catch it early and had the tumour removed. Unfortunately for me it recurred a year later and then metastasised – that means stage 4 and incurable. I guess I fall into the 5%!

So, I’ve been dealing with this disease for 6 years now and I am still amazed at how few people ask me about how I discovered I had cancer and what the symptoms were. Even from close friends. And that’s from a big group of male pals, who, when it comes to humour, still enjoy a good bit of toilet humour!

In case you were wondering, these are the symptoms to look out for

Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood in your poo

A persistent and unexplained change in bowel habit

Unexplained weight loss

Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason

A pain or lump in your tummy

Don’t make it taboo, talk about your poo

I have tried to raise awareness and funds for the charities that are engaged in the fight to reduce the number cancer diagnoses and increase survival times for people like me. I have also tried to help the charities that provide invaluable support for cancer sufferers and their families – The Mulberry Centre being one of those incredible organisations.

I have now launched my own charity, The Cancer Club to help men living with advanced cancer. Since I have been diagnosed it has been incredibly hard to find anyone “in the same boat”. Men are typically very poor at opening up about their health issues, Sadly, we often leave it too late to visit the Doctor, and as a result more men die from cancer. I am hoping I can provide some support to those in need. Please look at www.thecancerclub.co.uk

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