

In February of 2023, in an effort to be proactive about my health, I took a genetic test that checks you for 90 different cancer genes. I tested negative for all, including BRCA (the most well-known breast cancer gene). My sister Sara had just tested negative as well. We called each other and high-fived over the phone. That same winter I also had a normal mammogram.

Two months later I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

In the past ten months I have had four surgeries, so many days spent in bed I can't even count and have learned more about cancer, cancer treatment and hormones than I ever could have imagined. Surprisingly, I've only cried twice. I guess I haven't felt like there was time to cry. My focus narrowed and I tabled any emotions that I felt would interfere with my ability to stay clearheaded.

I've tended to let people see me when I have energy, when I can get dressed and get out of the house, when I can take my baby boy to the park. I've kept the diagnosis and the worry and the recovery and the pain medicine and the paper gowns private. I needed to catch my breath and get through some of the hardest parts before sharing.

I wouldn't have found my cancer for another year - at my next scheduled mammogram - except that my OBGYN, Dr. Thaïs Aliabadi, decided to calculate my Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Score. The fact that she did saved my life.

Dr. Aliabadi looked at factors like my age, familial breast cancer history, and the fact that I had my first child after the age of 30. She discovered my lifetime risk was at 37%. Because of that score I was sent to get an MRI, which led to an ultrasound, which then led to a biopsy. The biopsy showed I had Luminal B cancer in both breasts. Luminal B is an aggressive, fast moving cancer.

30 days after that biopsy I had a double mastectomy. I went from feeling completely fine one day, to waking up in a hospital bed after a 10-hour surgery the next.

I'm lucky. We caught it with enough time that I had options. I want the same for any woman who might have to face this one day. Ask your doctor to calculate your Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Score. Dr. Aliabadi says that If the number is greater than 20%, you need annual mammograms and breast MRIs starting at age 30.

I'm so thankful to my friends and family for loving me through this. I'm so thankful to John for the nights he spent researching what every operation and medication meant and what side effects and recovery I could expect. For being there before I went into each surgery and being there when I woke up, always placing framed photos of our little boy Malcolm so it would be the first thing I saw when I opened my eyes.

Thank you to the friends who've had breast cancer and the friends who connected me to friends who've had breast cancer for guiding me through some of my most uncertain and overwhelming moments.

I am extremely grateful to the nurses, patient coordinators and staff at Cedars-Sinai in LA and Saint John's in Santa Monica. I want to specifically thank my surgical oncologist Dr. Armando Giuliano, my reconstructive surgeon Dr. Jay Orringer, my oncologist Dr. Monica Mita, and especially my guardian angel, Dr. Thaïs Aliabadi.

Thank you thank you thank you thank you...

❤️ Olivia Munn