

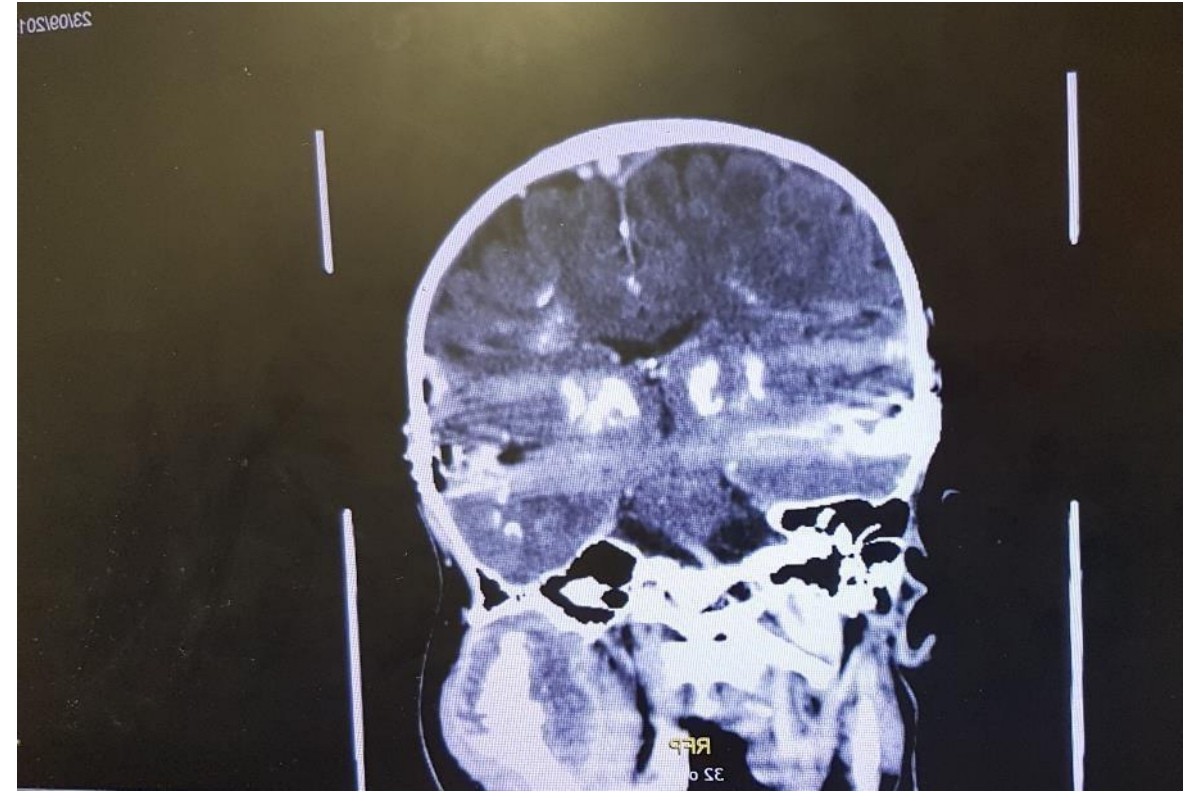
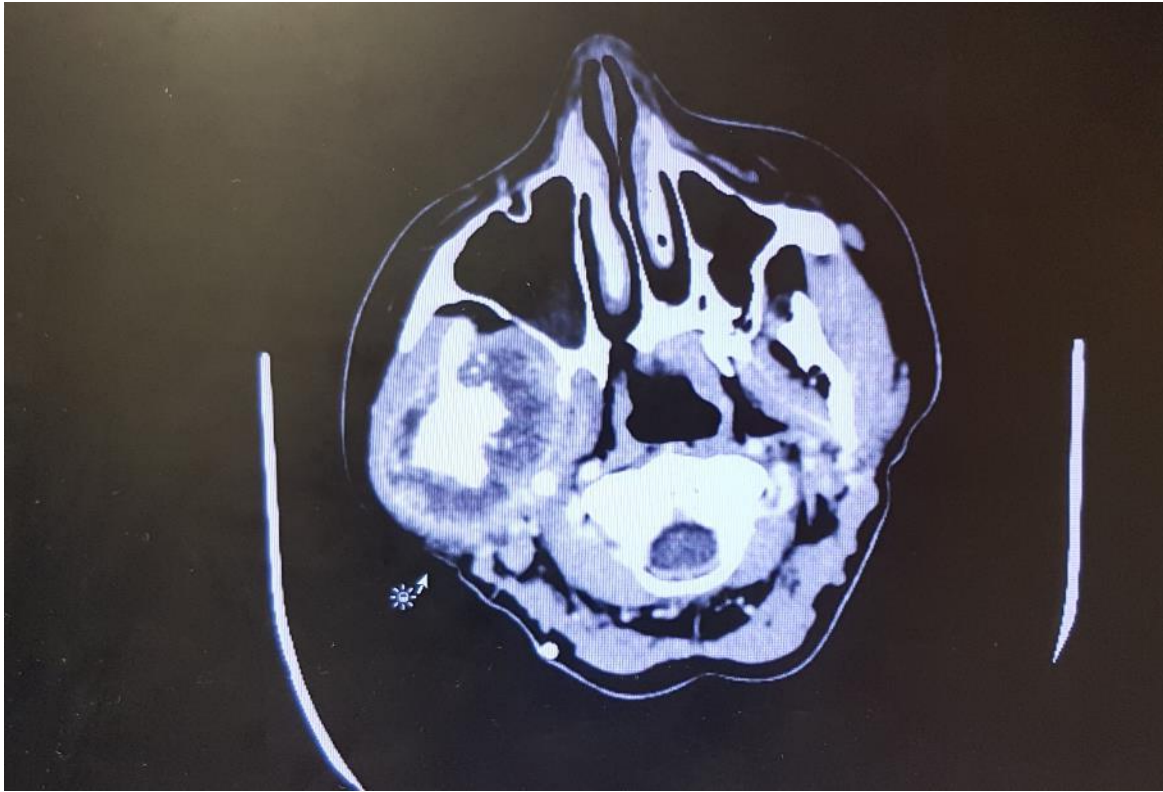


Rory Gardiner's journey with Osteosarcoma

On 16th September 2019 my big brother Sam noticed a large hard lump on the left-hand side of my face by my ear.

No one else had noticed it.

We did not know what it was or how long it had been there



A CT scan was done at Taranaki Base Hospital on 23rd September. The Doctors told us the lump was a tumor (5x5cm).

I was scared and upset because I have had cancer before. I had Medulloblastoma (brain cancer) when I was 7. I endured nine months of treatment. All of my disabilities are caused by the cancer and its treatment.

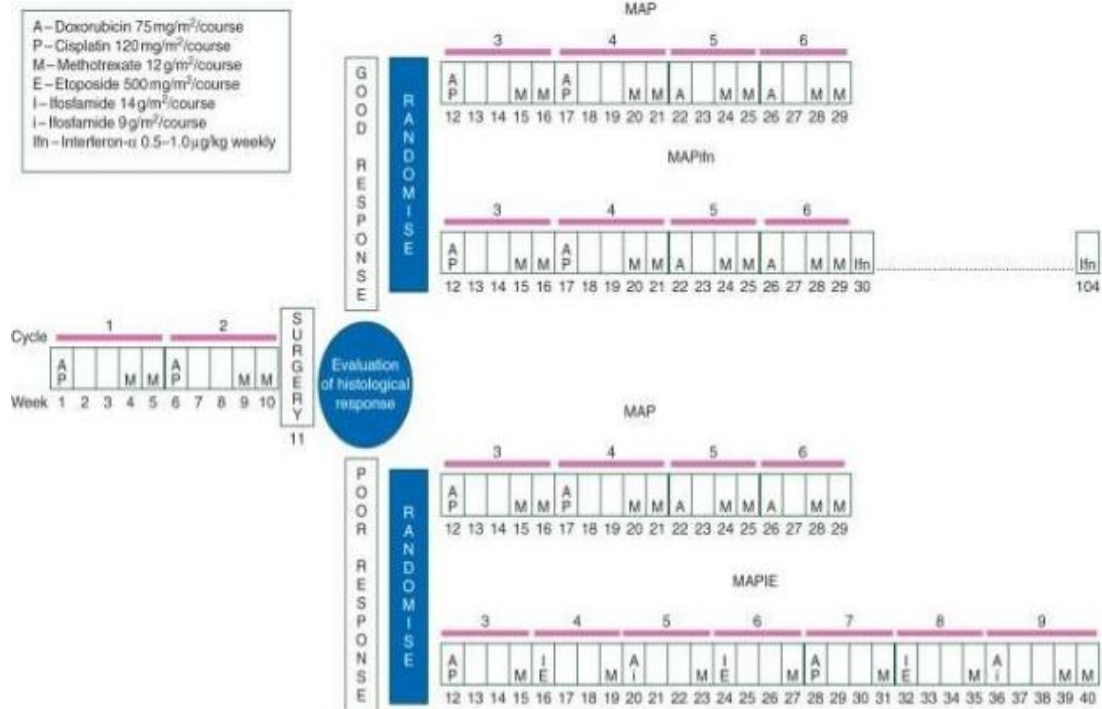


At Starship Hospital in Auckland they did a biopsy.
On the 27th of September 2019 we found out the tumor was
Chondroblastic osteosarcoma, a type of bone cancer.
The tumor was in my left lower mandible (jaw).

The Doctors think it was caused by the radiation therapy I
received to treat Medulloblastoma.



In Auckland I had a full body PET scan to check if there was evidence of cancer elsewhere in my body.
I was lucky there wasn't.



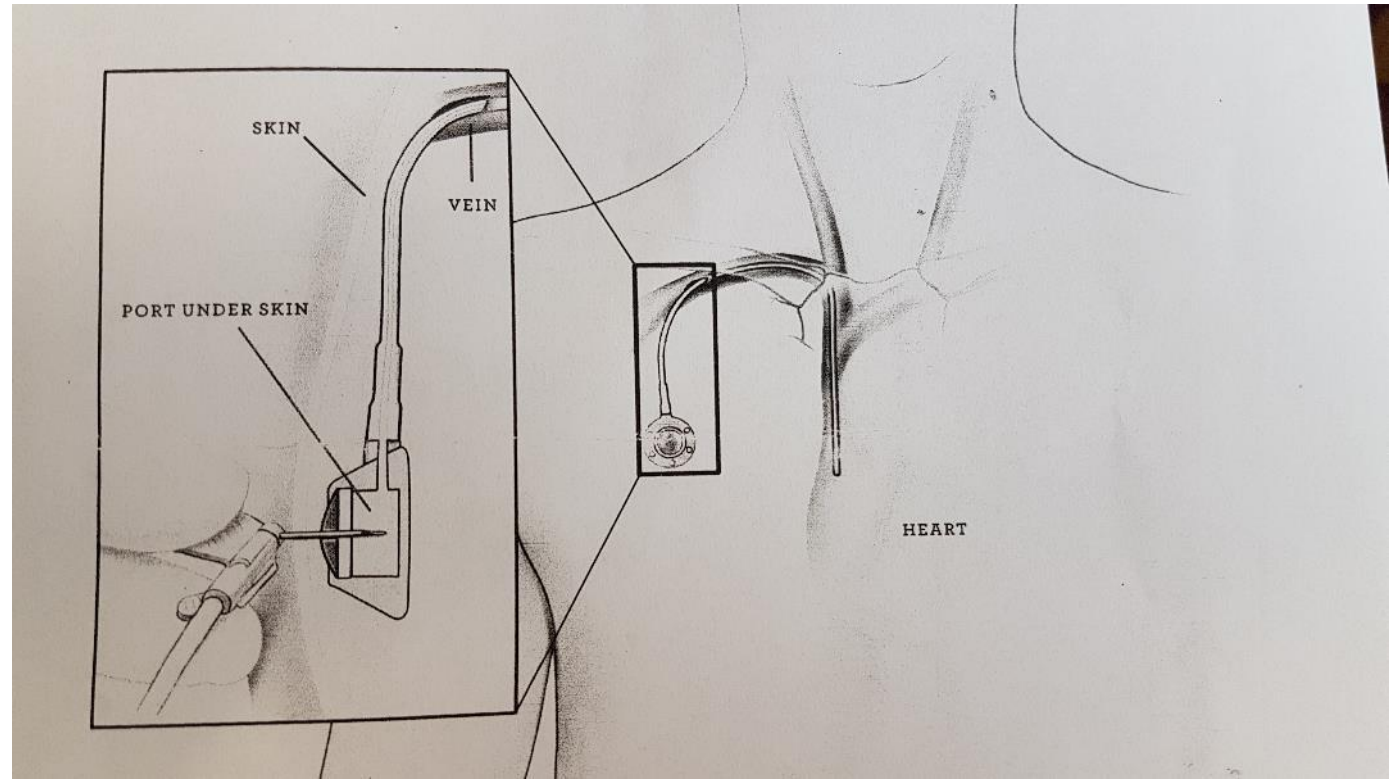
The MAP chemotherapy protocol is named after the drugs which are given. Treatment lasts for 29 weeks, but there are always delays as your body takes time to recover. Surgery to remove the tumor, if this is possible, occurs in week 11.

Dr Stephen Laughton took over co-ordination of my care. He has been my Oncologist for 11 years. He is assisted by Nurse Specialist Tracey. They explained the treatment plan.

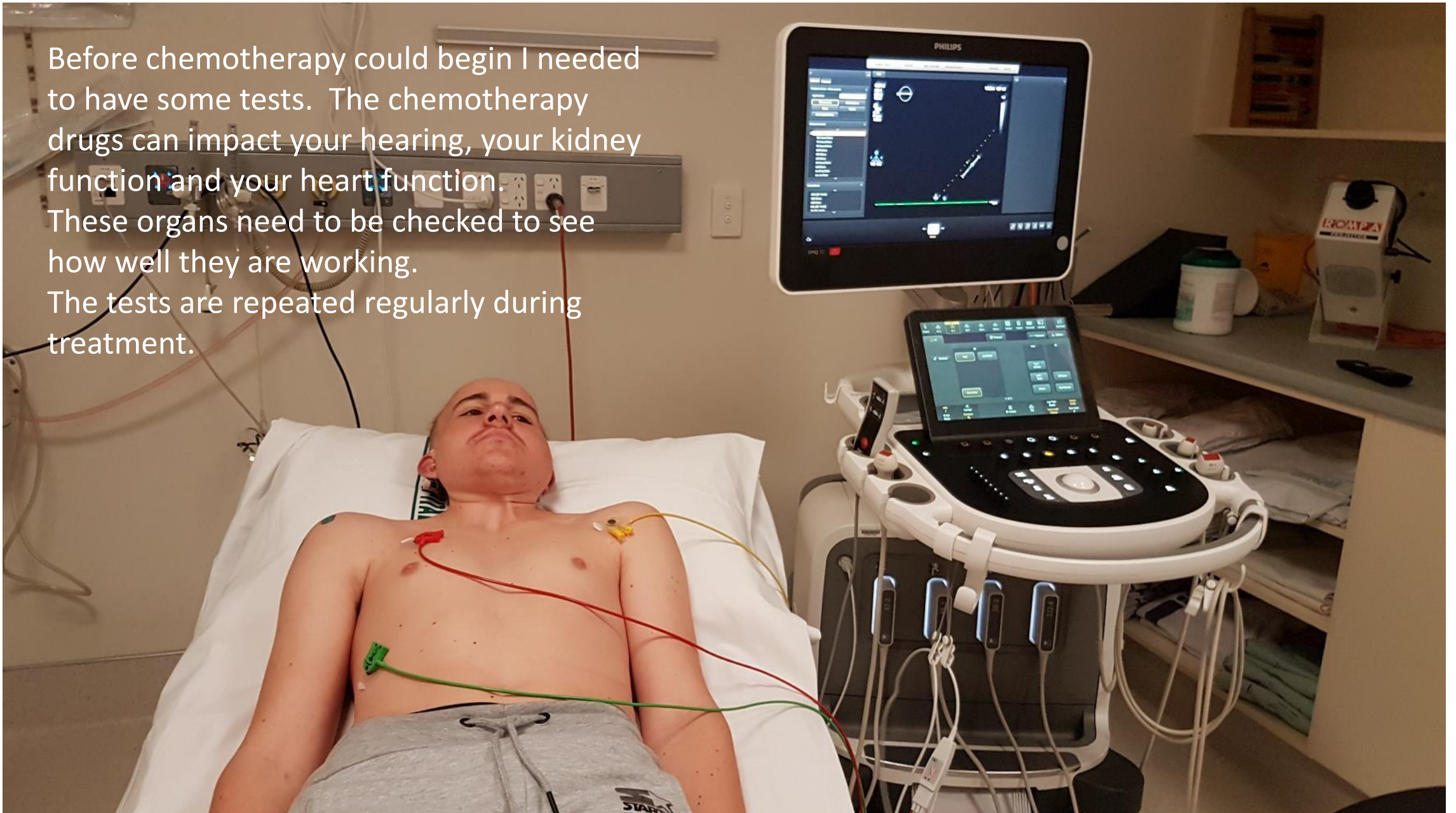


I had an operation to insert a port-a-cath into my chest.
It is threaded into a large vein above the right-hand side of my heart.

The port is used to give;
intra-venous fluids,
chemotherapy and
blood transfusions.



Before chemotherapy could begin I needed to have some tests. The chemotherapy drugs can impact your hearing, your kidney function and your heart function. These organs need to be checked to see how well they are working. The tests are repeated regularly during treatment.





Chemotherapy started on 2nd of October 2019.

I stay in Starship Hospital each time I receive the chemotherapy drugs.

The longest stay is for methotrexate which takes five days to clear from my body.

I am given other medication to protect my body and to relieve side effects such as nausea, vomiting, ulcers, pain and weight changes.

My family support me during my treatment.
They make sure I am never alone.





Family, friends, neighbours, strangers and community organisations have generously given to our family without being asked, often on several occasions, to help make our lives easier so we can keep fighting.

We appreciate their love and support.

I got a break from cancer treatment at the end of December 2019 so I was able to be home to celebrate my brother Colt's 9th birthday, Christmas and my Nana and Poppa Honor's 50th wedding anniversary.



On 8th January 2020 I underwent a 11.5 hour operation to remove the tumor and reconstruct my left lower jaw.

My left leg was the donor site for reconstruction.

I was in DCCM (intensive care) at Auckland Hospital for three days.





After the surgery there was a lot of swelling. Each wound drained excess fluid into a bottle while they healed.

In the left-hand side of my neck were electrodes which monitored the blood flow on the rebuilt side of my face. I received nutrition via an NG tube. I was not allowed to eat or drink.

I struggled to talk. No one could understand me.

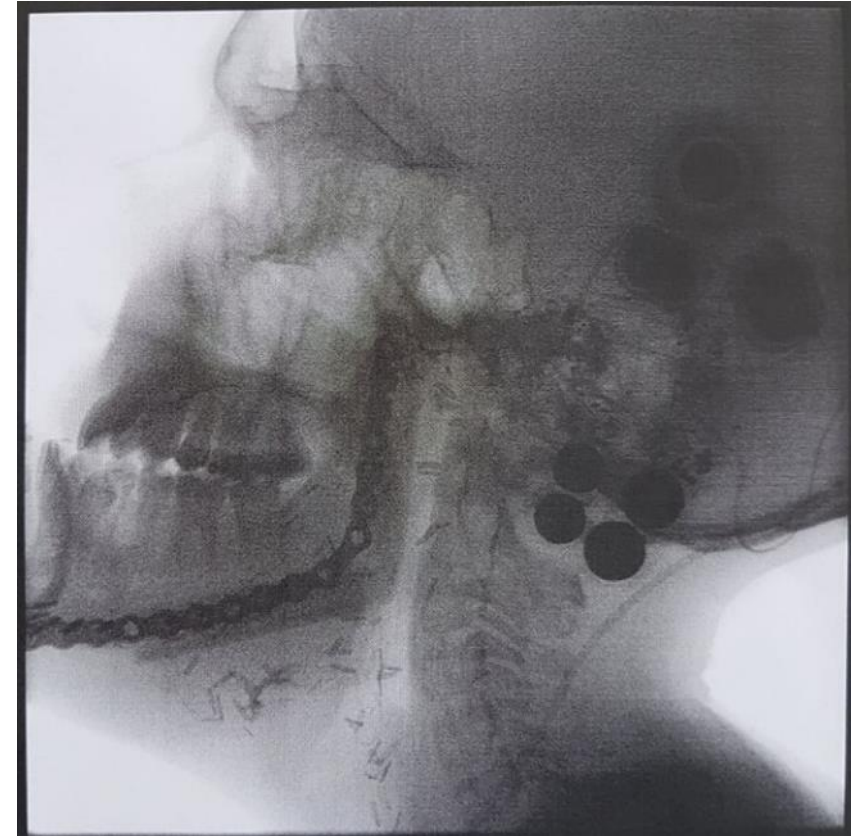
My left leg was in a cast and moon boot. I wasn't allowed to stand.

I was on a lot of medication.





As part of my recovery I needed rehabilitation to eat, speak and walk again. Gradually the wounds healed. I was discharged after two weeks in Auckland Hospital.





This is the great surgical team.
Dr Nick removed the tumor and Dr Ilia reconstructed my left lower jaw.
They managed to remove all the tumor with very narrow clear margins.
They reconstructed my jaw so well I can eat most food and talk.

One month after surgery chemotherapy started again. That was three months ago.
My CT scan in March 2020 was clear of cancer.
I currently have three doses of methotrexate left. This will take around six weeks.
My body is taking longer to recover between doses. I have had several blood transfusions and my body has been in adrenal crisis three times.
It is hard to keep going. I don't want to be in the hospital anymore. I am trying to stay strong.





To keep my spirits up my family take me into the outdoors. I like the freedom and to feel the sun and wind on my face.

We received grants from the Halberg Foundation, George Mason Charitable Trust and a local funder to purchase a Hippocampe All Terrain Chair so we can go more places.





I find happiness in building lego, being at Inglewood High and receiving visits from special people.



I am a cancer survivor. I hope to stay that way.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our family over the last eight months. Your love and generosity have meant we could put all our energy into fighting cancer.



Thank you to the community organisations who support Kiwi families during their toughest times.



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