



Health Benefits

UNTIL THIS YEAR THE MOST MAJOR MEDICAL procedure I'd had was having my tonsils removed when I was seven. But 2009 turned out to be a medical kind of year and this being our Top Doctors issue, it seemed fitting to talk about the human side of medicine. The side that doesn't have to do with insurance companies, deductibles or denied claims, rather the side that heals and has a heart.

When my ob-gyn recommended that I have my first mammogram I questioned the timing, believing I was too young. She explained that to get the most accurate baseline it's best to have the test at age thirty-five. Thinking nothing of it, I had the mammogram. That would be my first of several trips to the Women's Breast Center at the Tully Health Center. They found a mass.

Dr. Robbi Kempner and the team at Tully—the receptionists, technicians, nurses and anesthesiologist—were, of course, extremely professional. But what really stood out was the compassion, consideration and, when appropriate, humor that they *all* exhibited. Through every step of the process—from biopsy to pre-op to surgery to post-op—I was treated as a person, not a patient. Although for them this was a job, for me it was a scary and emotional time and they knew that. I was lucky. The mass was removed in time and no cancer was found.

About five months after my scare the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force released a recommendation stating that there is no need for women to have regular mammograms until the age of fifty. The reason being that mammograms can lead to false positives, which can cause undo psychological anxiety. *Really?!* The Task Force issued an apology. Consider this my soapbox plea to

not listen to any so-called “expert” that claims diagnostic screening is unnecessary.

Thankfully, the other surgery on my '09 calendar was elective. I've worn glasses almost my entire life. Contacts, though I tried every type known to man, infected my eyes. Finally fed up with having to squint my way through an evening, I made an appointment with Dr. Suresh Mandava (who has earned a spot for the third year on our Top Doctors list) to determine if I were a candidate for LASIK eye surgery. I was.

Having your eyeballs zapped is kind of a scary prospect. But knowing that I was in the hands of a man who had performed corneal transplants, I figured this was a no-brainer for him. It was. Dr. Mandava has performed some 10,000 LASIK eye surgeries and yet he answered my questions as though it were his first time ever hearing them. His staff was equally kind. In the operating room, one nurse's sole job was to hold my hand. Music played from the stereo and we chatted as my eyes were, well, we don't need to go into the details, so we'll just say “fixed.” Ten minutes after the surgery I was seeing 20/40, the next morning 20/20.

I would expect that each one of the 126 doctors featured in this issue (a list based on peer reviews, medical qualifications and education) exhibits the same level of care that I've been lucky enough to receive this past year.

With all of the debate about socialized medicine, let's not forget the importance of humanized medicine. Wishing you all a truly healthy 2010.

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