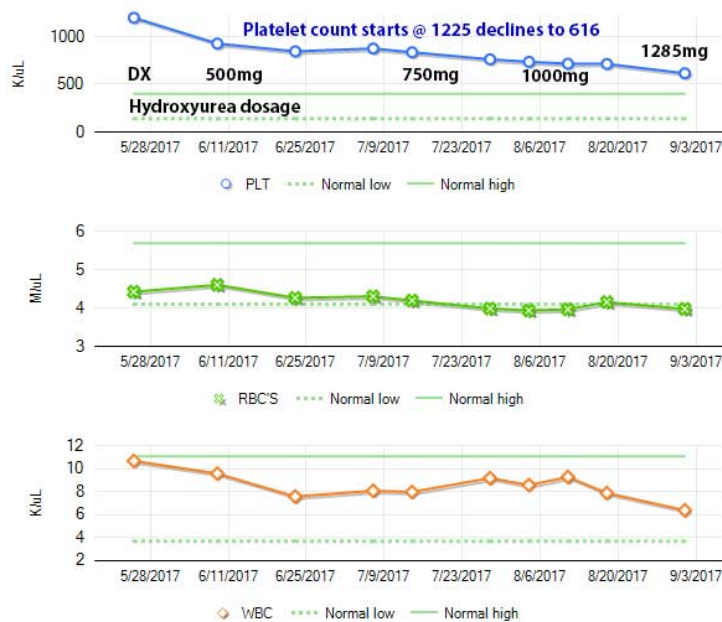


I haven't had a woman claw my back like that in a long time!



More doc visits, more tests. Man, if I'd been willing to go to this much trouble when I was racing, with the intent to improve performance, who knows what I could have accomplished! I could have been the next Lance Armstrong! Not.

Wednesday morning was my first-ever visit with a Dermatologist. Not for checking out rogue moles, but to figure out a way to get rid of the itchy skin rashes I've had the past year or so. There was some concern they were either a symptom of my ET (Essential Thrombocythemia, a very mild bone marrow cancer) or the medication used to manage. But after taking some samples off my back (the "clawing" I referred to) and examining them under a microscope, it looks more like a simple skin fungus. Who knew.

Because the drug used to clear this up (Lamisil) can tax the liver a bit, I had not only my usual vial of blood drawn, but another two used to figure out how well my liver is actually working. Good news; the average 3-4 drinks I have/year haven't done any damage. AST, ALT & processing tests all came back in normal range. Not unexpected. The better news is that the increased dosage of Hydroxyurea I'm now on has moved the needle some more, in the right direction, on the Platelet number. That's what's shown on the top line in the chart above. Unfortunately, there's also an expected reduction in WBC & RBC counts, reaffirming that Hydroxyurea is not a performance-enhancing drug. But, trust me on this, EPO is something I hope I never have to make use of, as that would be an indication of some real nasty problems.

Oh, right, since my mom's reading this- the Dermatologist did check out the various moles & skin discolorations while I was there. Nothing scary. I'm really, really boring. Even that large and gradually-getting-larger one adjacent to my right eye? If I really cared about what it looked like, she could burn it off for me, but hey, how many people's faces have something that looks like a map showing the gradual spread of the British Empire during colonial times?