

## Bloodwork Day!

I hate waiting for the blood test results. They used to come in quickly; now, they trickle in, with the first couple being of no real consequence, starting 10-12 hours after the blood draw.

My GP had left at least one test intact for my quarterly blood draws, for testosterone... a bit of a surprise when that came up first, unexpectedly. Along with the B12, which I had actually been curious about.

The good news, so far, is that my B12 level is now rising, no longer falling, measuring 531 this time. The testosterone, at 766, was considerably higher than expected at nearly 69 years old. Still within the normal range (240 to 899).

Waiting for the two that matter; Hematocrit and Platelets. Hematocrit because I'm athletic and low hematocrit is a definite issue for me, slowing me down. Platelets because, well, platelets! It's Essential Thrombosis that I'm being monitored for, a rare bone marrow cancer that causes me to create too many platelets.

It's been quite the journey since My 24th, 2017, when a routine test, done while looking for something entirely different from ET, scored 1.2 million at 61 years old. The most amazing thing is how scared to death I used to be of blood draws, so much fear that I'd collapse my veins and become a pin cushion as they'd stab me multiple times trying to find a usable vein, which created a downward spiral that made things worse and worse. Fear of blood draws actually kept me away from routine medical exams for decades at a time.

I even remember, nearly 40 years ago, feeling terribly bad, inadequate, worthless, because my fear of needles and blood kept me from donating blood when my father was dying from MF.

When I was diagnosed with ET, I knew the era of avoiding bloodwork was over. I initially dealt with it through dissociation and telling myself it's only time, nothing else, 5 minutes from now and it would all be over. With first daily then weekly bloodwork for a couple months, I resigned myself to the grim reality that I'd just have to get used to it.

Eventually I turned my thinking around and started to look forward to the then-monthly now-quarterly tests. Valuable, actionable data, something I could sink my teeth into and research. I found that, if I looked forward to it, I could actually relax and the process would go more easily, more quickly. And this morning, 9:50am, I didn't even feel the needle as it went in. I'm almost, not quite, to the point where I watch it.

Will update when the CBC comes in.