



Take steps for cancer patients, your loved ones — and yourself!

According to the American Cancer Society 9 out of 10 patients with colorectal cancer are over age 50. So Sara was shocked to learn she had the disease at just 37. Before her diagnosis, Sara had been feeling exhausted. But what mother of a toddler isn't? So at first, she thought her busy lifestyle as a mom was causing extreme fatigue. But after two years of feeling wiped out, she decided it was time for a checkup.

"I was stunned," she said. "I expected to hear that I was anemic or had a vitamin deficiency — I have always lived a healthy lifestyle. "

By the time of her diagnosis, Sara's physician had discovered a cancerous polyp that had progressed to a stage 3 tumor. Sara decided that "I couldn't have this going on in my life right now," and the fight was on. She chose UMass Memorial Health Care Cancer Center of Excellence after having a second opinion at a Boston hospital.

Sara had surgery to remove the tumor, and six months of chemotherapy infused through a pump. During her visits to the UMass Memorial Cancer Center of Excellence, Sara was comforted with warm blankets and a caring staff. She's also appreciative for the support her husband received from nurses who provided timely responses to his questions and sincere concern for his well-being.

Today Sara is cancer free. Looking back on her experience, she praises her physicians and nurses. "They are unflappable," said Sara. "The light in a cancer patient's day."

Time and again, patients provide testimonials like these about the warm and effective care they've received at the UMass Memorial Cancer Center of Excellence. This is the kind of care we'd all want if we were in their shoes. However, this kind of care and the research that leads to it come with a cost that would be impossible for patients to fund alone.

That's why events like the [2011 UMass Medicine Cancer Walk](#) are so important. This year, we're trying to raise more money than ever to keep the momentum going toward finding better treatments and ultimately, a cancer cure. Please consider walking and learning all you can about raising funds. Alone, your contribution may not seem like much. But combined with other participants' efforts, your steps can move us closer toward better care, treatments, and one day, a cure.

Watch [this video](#) to hear Sara's story in her own words. Then please [register](#) for this year's walk today! Do it for future patients, do it for your loved ones, do it for yourself — *because you never know.*