

YES, MY ONE NUT IS FAKE!

If you lose a testicle, or testicles, as a result of testicular cancer you may want to consider testicle implants. I had testicular cancer in 1995 at the age of 30. That evening when the doctor came and said it is aggressive cancer... that they have to

remove my right testis the next morning, was the moment my life shattered into a million pieces.

The doctor explained to me that the cancer comes about through the fusion of two sperm cells. They form an 'abnormal embryo' and also grows as fast as an embryo.

I tried to picture the tumour as big as a baby. But I couldn't. My thoughts were spinning madly. Actually they weren't really thoughts. There was chaos in my head and at the same time emptiness. "Therefore we not only have to remove the growth, but the entire testicle on the right... as quickly as possible... first thing tomorrow morning!" he said.

My biggest fear after the doctor told me that I have to go in for surgery was that they make a mistake and remove the healthy nut. Up until now I had never given any thought to cancer, and therefore I had no idea what I would be in for next. Mostly I was preoccupied with the fact that my right testicle would be removed the following day. This notion was the biggest horror.

After the surgery the cancer tormented me consciously and unconsciously. When I looked into the mirror it wasn't the silly baldness, which really bothered me, but the cause of it. When I looked at the many other shaven heads on the streets I immediately wondered whether they were shaven because of cancer or because it was fashionable. That was nonsense, of course.

I was also upset about my 'half-empty' underpants. All I could think of at the beach was that everybody must be aware that something is wrong. After all, a normal rabbit's foot has two toes! I was daft enough to compare myself with other men at the beach. Today I realise that I was probably the only one who noticed any difference. But it bothered me! I finally wanted to put everything behind me.

Before the operation I called the doctor to ask about

the procedure. I figured that it was only a minor surgical intervention through the scrotum and that they would send me home the same day. I couldn't have been more wrong.

"An incision is made into the pubic area," the doctor explained. "The implant is then pushed into the same passage through which the testicle was removed fourteen months ago."

All of a sudden I was scared again. Not again! It would lead to negative old memories resurfacing unnecessarily.

The main reason why I called was actually that I would like to see the implant before I am given the anaesthetic. I had to see it, and it was the one and only chance I had. After the operation I would only be able to feel it. For the rest of my life I wouldn't know what it looks like, and everybody would say, "Tell me, what an implant like that actually looks like?" "That can be arranged," the doctor said.

I stopped the anaesthetist. "Hold on, I want to see the implant first, I must see it."

The implant was transparent and a little firmer than my real testicle. Sexier! Sportier, almost muscular even! A soft rubber ball the shape of an egg. Suddenly I looked forward to this operation.

It was the last step with which I wanted to say good-bye to cancer to for good. The last step to make my body 'whole' again.

I hadn't quite come to from the anaesthesia yet when my right hand disappeared under the green gown. I wanted to know how it felt when I touched it. Bandages barred the way. I wasn't able to touch much, but it was definitely there. I cried tears of happiness and contentment. It was done...

It's already worth it, I thought. Once the wound has healed and the hair has grown back I'll be whole person again. Physically intact and in time I'll get my mind mended too. This I promised myself.

The school's office where I used to be a teacher at the time was my first stop after leaving hospital and the principal asked me: "And how do you feel?"

"I'm standing straight again," I beamed. "Like new! Whole! Complete! Just great! One handful is one handful again!"

Both of us swallowed hard. It was a tear-jerking moment.

