

## Monday's Doc visit, Tuesday's ride



While everyone else was outside looking (indirectly) at the eclipse, I was waiting for an appointment with my hematologist/oncologist that was scheduled three months ago, when an eclipse not only would have been the last thing on my mind, but, that far out, August 21st 9:50am wouldn't have rung any alarm bells. Three months ago, I was, frankly, scared to death, as a series of blood tests were bringing me what seemed, at the time, to be seriously-bad news. Let's face it, if you have a choice, you'd rather go through life without having to see an oncologist. Yeah, well, that was then, this is now. Unlike that first visit, I almost looked forward to this one, because after the initial bad news, things stabilized, and as I learned more about my particular situation, it seems safe to say that, among bone-marrow cancers, mine (Essential Thrombocythemia with a CALR Type 1 genetic mutation) is the best choice.

My primary concern was adding a platelet-reducing med that's known to cause heart issues (bad for cycling!) as well as possibly accelerate a progression of the disease to something much worse. I'm not sure my concerns about heart issues held much weight with her, but the possibility of making things worse down the road is tough to argue, plus the specifics of my genetic defect make my bone marrow's excessive platelet production less dangerous. In the end I settled for an increased dosage of my daily poison (chemo drug) and, best of all, move from a weekly blood test to monthly. So sure, I missed the eclipse, but gained confidence that I've got my bone marrow issue under control. Sure, I'm still producing too many platelets, but it's fewer than before and it's rock-solid stable, nothing scary happening. Even my hematocrit is returning to normal levels.

Not to say I felt super strong on the Tuesday-morning ride though! There might have been some effect from the increased dose of my chemo drug, but more likely it was just a high-gravity day. Thankfully, both Marcus and JR were kind to me on Kings and set a pretty easy pace, easy enough that I could even carry on a conversation most of the way up. No fog on top so I was a bit overdressed, but I'd rather be a bit warm than cold. Older Kevin is off on a bike ride in Spain while younger Kevin still has another two weeks off the bike while his arm heals. They missed a really nice day on the regular ride.

The Sunflower picture? No excuse needed, ever, for pictures of Sunflowers!