

Questions & Answers

Regarding Steve Willoughby's Health

2 December 2008

Q1: What is wrong with Bishop Willoughby?

The biopsy performed on the growth removed from the space in between Bishop Willoughby's lung and heart showed that the presence of melanoma cells. Bishop Willoughby has been diagnosed as suffering from metastatic melanoma.

Q2: What is metastatic melanoma?

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer. It begins in the melanocytes, the cells that make skin pigment, or melanin. Metastatic melanoma is a term used to describe when melanoma has spread into surrounding healthy tissue and through the bloodstream or lymphatic system to other parts of the body such as the liver, lungs or brain. As mentioned earlier, Bishop Willoughby has two tumors in his brain and a growth was removed earlier from his chest cavity. When melanoma metastases, it has a tendency to go to the brain and cause tumors which bleed.

Q3: What stage of cancer does Bishop Willoughby have?

Bishop Willoughby has Stage 4 cancer because the cancer has spread from the original source (unknown at this time) to the brain and previously his chest cavity.

Q4: What causes melanoma?

The main cause of melanoma is too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation reaching the skin. Additional risk factors for melanoma include many moles (more than 50) or moles that change appearance, fair skin, a family history of the disease, past severe sunburn and a weakened immune system.

Q5: What were the results of the PET-CT scan performed on Wednesday, 26 November?

The PET-CT scan showed that there were no additional malignant growths in Bishop Willoughby's body. A 7mm suspicious spot beneath the skin of Bishop Willoughby's leg was found. This spot will be investigated further by a melanoma specialist on Tuesday, 2 December.

Q6: What treatment will Bishop Willoughby receive?

A MRI was performed on Bishop Willoughby on Monday, 1 December to re-examine the brain tumors. Bishop Willoughby will undergo five rounds of high dose targeted radiotherapy to destroy the tumors, which are inoperable. He will also be given oral chemotherapy to prevent further recurrence of melanoma.

Q7: What are the side effects to the treatment Bishop Willoughby will be receiving?

Possible side effects of the radiotherapy include scarring of the brain tissue, tiredness and muscle weakness in the legs. The oral chemotherapy that Bishop Willoughby will be started on will have fewer side effects than conventional chemotherapy (IV chemo).

Q8: What will be the results of the treatment?

With the radiotherapy, the brain tumors will start to shrink and die. It will take a few months for the dizziness and numbness in the leg that Bishop Willoughby continues to experience to subside.

Q9: Why is Bishop Willoughby having treatment in the US instead of Singapore?

Bishop Willoughby is having treatment in the US at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York City because specialists in Singapore and New York have stated that it is unwise for him to travel with the brain tumors without treatment. Secondly, melanoma is an uncommon cancer in Singapore. Specialists consulted in Singapore have advised that Bishop Willoughby receive treatment in the US, as specialist expertise for this form of cancer is more readily available.

Q10: When will Bishop Willoughby return to Singapore?

Bishop Willoughby will return to Singapore once he completes his radiotherapy programme. Tentatively, Bishop and Sis Willoughby will return to Singapore end December 2008.

Q11: How is Bishop Willoughby feeling now?

Bishop Willoughby is being treated with steroids to alleviate the dizziness and numbness in his leg, which affects his mobility. The steroids will help to reduce the swelling in his brain. Emotionally, Bishop Willoughby is upbeat and thankful for what God has done in his life so far and what He will continue to do.