



### **Winnipeg woman celebrates hope for a future without ovarian cancer**

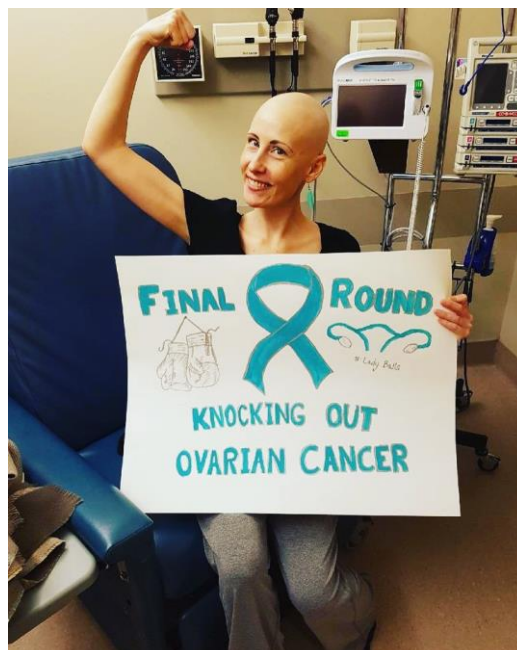
For many couples having trouble conceiving a child, the road to determining why can be frustrating and painful. For Charlotte Cook-Dowsett, consultation with a fertility specialist, several tests and eventually surgery gave her a definitive answer – but it was not good news. At the age of 34 she faced a diagnosis of ovarian cancer.

“The specialist did a laparoscopy to explore and assess my ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus. What he found was a 6-inch endometrioid cyst on my right ovary” she says. “He decided surgery was in order and still assured me that the likelihood of this particular kind of cyst being cancer was less than 2%. I should have bought a lottery ticket.”

Every year in Canada, 2,800 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Only 44% of women diagnosed live five years beyond their diagnosis. Ms. Cook-Dowsett counts herself as one of the lucky ones.

“I am fully aware of how fortunate I am to have found the cancer so early,” she says. “I have lost many physical, mental and emotional parts of myself, but ... I have also gained an inner strength I had no idea resided inside of me, a love for life I had never experienced before, and an appreciation for good health and the incredible people in my life.”

After finishing six rounds of chemotherapy in April, Ms. Cook-Dowsett is now turning her attention to raising awareness and funds for the cause as the spokesperson for the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope in Winnipeg.



*Charlotte Cook-Dowsett celebrates the milestone of her final round of chemotherapy for ovarian cancer in April 2017*

Since starting in 2002, the Walk has raised more than \$23-million for support, awareness and research. “Survival rates haven't improved in 50 years. We need to change that statistic,” Ms. Cook-Dowsett says. “The Walk celebrates the hope I carry with me every day – the hope for a future without this disease.”

She’s also still hoping to become a mother. “Because I told my doctor that fertility was my number one concern, she also made it hers,” she says. With little time to spare before her surgery, Ms. Cook-Dowsett completed a round of in vitro fertilization (IVF). “The embryo I was lucky enough to create is what gave me the strength to keep going. I know I am meant to be a mother.”



*Charlotte Cook-Dowsett and her husband, Sean, a year before she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer.*

Once she has had more time to heal after chemotherapy she is looking forward to the next steps to implant the embryo and carry a child.

Ms. Cook-Dowsett invites you to join her on Walk day at Kildonan Park in Winnipeg on September 10. For more information, to donate or sign up, visit [ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca](http://ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca)