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Twins battle prostate cancer together

Wendy Rigby - KENS 5 Eyewitness News Catching cancer early can be key to treating it and beating it. Two South Texas men who share plenty of genetics are also sharing the disease, and they're taking the journey to cure together.

Randy and Rusty Coward are South Texas born and raised. The 46-year-old twins have shared lots of things growing up — including a healthy sense of competition. Now, they're teaming up to beat a potential killer.

"Yeah, it was a shock," Rusty Coward said.

Last year, Rusty was diagnosed with prostate cancer after a routine PSA blood test showed a need for a biopsy.

"Since it showed up on his PSA, they said to do one on me, too," Randy said.

Randy rolled up his sleeves and ended up with news he didn't want. Doctors said he, too, needed a biopsy, and it was positive.

"We have too many similarities to think it would be me, too. I'm usually included in everything he gets," Randy said.

The twins opted for prostate surgery on the same day. Oncological surgeon Dr. Naveen Kella took out the cancerous glands using a special robot at St. Luke's Hospital. The mechanical approach cuts down on bleeding and allows precision removal of the cancer.

"I tell patients that this is like a really fancy power tool, and as long as someone knows how to use that power tool, that's the way to go," Kella said. "When we did the surgery, it turned out their cancer was in the exact same spot as well."

Rusty says his insurance paid to have his PSA tests from age 40 on, an early detection policy that's had a huge impact on him and his twin.

"Getting your prostate, your PSA checked early, to me, I feel like it really saved my life," he said.

Doctors are learning more and more about the genetics of cancer. The current recommendations is that anyone with a first-degree male relative with prostate cancer, or anyone who is African-American, begin screening for the disease at age 40.

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