



Live for today



"Just be positive, put your lippy on, and live for today"

Paula Beevor was just 39 and the mother of three teenage children when she was first diagnosed with breast cancer. After surgery, radiation therapy and hormone therapy, followed by anti-hormone therapy, she was quietly confident she had beaten the disease. So confident, that she made a life-changing decision to move to Australia from the United Kingdom. But nine years later, routine scans revealed a secondary tumour, this time on her lungs. Paula has undergone chemotherapy and is now in remission. Now, as a first-time grandmother to three-month old Elliott, she knows that breast cancer is a disease she must live with, but is determined not to dwell on the 'what ifs?'

"I am 52 years old, I am happily married and the mother of three grown up children. I was first diagnosed in 2003. I did not have a lump or anything, I just had a dimple. I had it looked at, but you don't think it is going to be breast cancer. It was a shock when they told me. My kids were 13, 14 and 15 at the time. I was fit and healthy, I did not drink or smoke, I had my children young and I had breastfed all my kids. I did everything right, but I don't think you can pick it, can you?"

"You just panic about your children, that is your main concern"

You just panic about your children, that is your main concern. My husband and I agreed to always be truthful to the kids but to not let

my diagnosis affect our everyday family life. Looking back now I can say, apart from the obvious worry my children had for me, they have all gone on to lead successful and happy lives. The cancer was stage 1 when they caught it and it was only two centimetres, so I did not have to have my breast removed. I went through surgery and then radiation therapy for about seven weeks, before going on hormone medication for seven years.

I thought I had beaten it. We had been on holiday to Australia and thought about moving before, but we never did anything about it.

But after having cancer I thought, 'let's just do it, life is too short'.

So, in 2006 we packed up the three teenagers and our dog and moved. That was something I would not have done before cancer. It is the best thing we have ever done in our lives. I set up my own little business in Perth, a clothing shop called Love To Be, which I still run. I am also opening a second store this month.

I was having regular check ups and then a routine scan revealed I had a secondary cancer on my lung.

I was absolutely devastated and annoyed that after nine years I had to deal with it again.

I went on oral chemotherapy for a few years, but it was not clearing the cancer so I went on intravenous chemotherapy last year. I had 24 weeks of weekly chemo. Losing my hair was the worst part, you just feel shocking. Not only do you feel unwell and have to fight this disease, but it also affects your appearance drastically.

The chemo itself was not as bad as I thought. Although it is different for everyone, I was not sick with it and I still managed to work. I would have the chemo on the Monday, then on the Tuesday I would rest a little and then Wednesday I would go back to work.

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Throughout treatment I managed to still live my life. When you have your own business you are always working full time.

My friend is a hairdresser and organised a fantastic wig for me! It looked just like my hair so a lot of people didn't even realise I was sick. I put my make up on every day and tried to carry on as normal. When I was undergoing treatment my daughter told me she was pregnant, so that kept me going. Elliott is now three months old and he is gorgeous.

I am currently in remission. For me, they can never say it's cured but it's not there at the moment. I try to keep a positive mental attitude and not worry about what might happen. Thankfully I had a lot of support from my friends and family, as well as new friends I met on the journey. I know what breast cancer can do, I know it can spread, however my oncologist assures me she has lots of other treatments up her sleeve and I could always go on a trial if the cancer returns.

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* Paula shared her story in June 2017.