



**Sandhy Robinson Jones, 48, a graphic designer from Exeter, was diagnosed with stage 3 (there are four stages) ovarian cancer in 2008. She had a total hysterectomy and four months of chemotherapy and is now in her third year of remission.**

I've always had a flat tummy and narrow waist, so the first sign that something wasn't right was noticeable bloating and feeling sick. It was when I was in the shower that I felt a bump in the lower part of my stomach. I was convinced that it was a hernia. Over the weeks the bump got progressively bigger and I started feeling more and more exhausted. Eventually I went to my GP who had an instinct that I needed urgent attention and sent me for a CT scan.

The results showed a mass, which the consultant referred to as a 'malignant tumour'. I was referred immediately to a surgeon who confirmed it was cancer.

After the diagnosis I went straight to the pub with my husband Andrew and ordered a giant glass of wine – it was wine and a sense of humour that would get me through what was to come. My mother and two brothers were utterly shocked and distressed; my mother, who is 65, knew all about ovarian cancer as she had friends with the disease, but I had never heard of it.

If I was going to give someone facing this disease any advice, it would be never Google ovarian cancer. The night I was diagnosed, Andrew and I researched the disease on the internet and it gave a very depressing impression of the situation. I've since started a blog to document my very real experience ([sandhysown.blogspot.com](http://sandhysown.blogspot.com)) – it's been so cathartic. I often blogged at 3am when suffering post-chemo-induced insomnia. Writing became a form of self-therapy.

## **'It was wine and a sense of humour that would get me through'**

6 of 11

6:16 AM

When it came to surgery I gave permission to remove as much as was considered necessary. Having my womb and ovaries removed was not an issue. I've been married for 11 years but we'd never tried for children – life had just zoomed past and the opportunity had passed me by. They weren't on the agenda and I just wanted to be as cancer-free as possible, so the surgeon ended up cutting from my pubic bone to my navel.

The effects of the chemo were mainly losing my hair and gaining weight – I was bald and fat, not much fun, but I got through it. And I was left with an overwhelming urge to get fit. First up was circuit-training to build up my stamina, next I was signing up for a cycle ride in Kenya. I had never been into fitness before, but the cycle challenge changed my life. I rode 250km over seven days and helped raise £1.5 million for cancer charities.

Now I can't stop – I'm training for Nightrider, a night-time cycle around London, and another across Cuba in 2013 ([justgiving.com/sandhy-cycles-Cuba](http://justgiving.com/sandhy-cycles-Cuba)). I don't do these rides because I'm angry, I do them to honour those who have lost to this hideous disease, and in the hope that I can inspire, support and encourage others in their own fight against it. I cycle for them because I can and, because one day, I might need someone to cycle for me.

For more information on the disease, contact Ovarian Cancer Action, tel: 0300 456 4700, [ovarian.org.uk](http://ovarian.org.uk)