

Solihull mum proves medics wrong after being given three years to live

by Zoe Chamberlain, Birmingham Mail | [Apr 1 2012](#)



ONE day I found I had two large lumps in my stomach – one the size of a melon and the other the size of a grapefruit.

After seeing various doctors, I was told I'd have to have a hysterectomy and my ovaries taken away.

I didn't panic. I was just glad it was getting sorted. The word 'cancer' was never mentioned.

After coming back from theatre, the surgeon came to tell me he'd decided to leave a little bit on my bowel so that I didn't have to have a colostomy bag but not to worry because the chemotherapy would get rid of it.

They told me they were going to use two types of chemotherapy, Taxol and Carboplatin, which would make me lose my hair.

When they said that, I just broke down. No-one had said it was cancer to me before this point. I had just thought they were taking away ovarian cysts.

It turned out it was stage 3 ovarian cancer, which they say means you usually have three years to live.

I was only 51. I sat in hospital, thinking very negative thoughts. I planned my funeral.

I thought I was doing really well with my chemo but, two days



before I went for my second lot, my hair started falling out in clumps. I just sat on the bed and cried. I lost my eyelashes and eyebrows too.

To make matters worse the hysterectomy had brought on surgically-induced menopause so I was suffering hot flushes and everything that goes with it.

I had to give up my job as a medical secretary because it didn't seem fair to the company for me to be out of the office so much.

I have three sons, six grandchildren and a four-month-old great granddaughter. My family were very upset to begin with but they've been so supportive.



I joined the Solihull Cancer Support group where I met some inspirational, positive women. They made me think 'Right I'm going to beat this'.

It does seem as though the more positive thinking people use, the longer they live.

I found a great lady in West Bromwich who makes wonderful wigs. She sells lovely scarves and hats, too,

and that made a big difference.

I was going for three-monthly check-ups and at 11 months in, my hair had started to grow back – and it was curly!

I was getting ready to be put into remission – but a CT scan showed that the cancer had come back.

I had been regularly warned that ovarian cancer does tend to come back when you're stage 3, like I am. I was so upset but I realised I just had to deal with it.

I knew what to expect with my hair falling out so I had it cut really short and then shaved off. That eased the stress of finding my hair everywhere, especially on the pillow in the mornings.

Besides, I already had my wigs and hats and lots of support around me.

