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A quick diagnosis

Everything happened so quickly. I was diagnosed within just three days of my colonoscopy.

The bad news was, I had a particularly aggressive bowel cancer. Normally, the kind of bowel tumour I had should be about the size of a 50p piece. Mine was 20 by 6cm! It had already spread to my liver and both lungs, too – a Stage Four cancer. I wasn't expected to get past 12 months.

Access to the right medication

I received the right medication straight away and just a week after my initial diagnosis, I had surgery to remove the tumour in my bowel. I started intensive chemotherapy soon after, to deal with the secondary tumours.

Today, I have maintenance chemo every three weeks, plus I'm on a lifetime maintenance course of medication, which is helping to reduce the risk of the cancer flaring up again. Whilst I do suffer from side effects (including high blood pressure, fatigue and joint pain), I still feel lucky.

Getting on with enjoying life

The treatment means I can lead an active, normal life. I make sure I take my dog for a five-mile walk every day, I train at the gym and I'm back to practicing yoga, regularly – in fact I recently qualified as a yoga teacher!

Since the day I was diagnosed, the oncology support team have been absolutely incredible. I know I can call them at any point and they will be there to reassure me and help me with whatever I need. I've also received great support from the charity Beating Bowel Cancer which offers patients help via its website, a nurse helpline and an online patient forum.

I've had access to great medication but the other thing that I want people to realise is that this cancer is very treatable – if it's diagnosed early. Listen to any symptoms and act on them, it could save your life.

Steve's story: surviving Stage 4 bowel cancer

I was 49 years old, running every day, and doing eight hours of yoga a week. So I didn't think there could be anything wrong with me.

But suddenly I started needing to go to the loo all the time, up to 12 times a day. I thought I might be suffering from a food intolerance or IBS, something like that.

I went to see my GP, who referred me for tests.



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