# Olivia Knowles' battle with acute myeloid leukaemia and fundraising for research



In an unfolding medical journey marked by misdiagnoses and resilience, Olivia Knowles, a 33-year-old hair salon owner from Blackpool, has shared her harrowing experience battling acute myeloid leukaemia (AML). Initially, Knowles began experiencing headaches and fatigue in late 2023, and was advised by a private doctor that she likely had long Covid. However, following intense tooth pain that prompted an emergency visit to a local hospital, she was diagnosed with AML, an aggressive cancer that often has a poor prognosis.

Knowles’ diagnosis came as a shock. Reflecting on her condition, she stated, “I’m not saying I was the healthiest person in the world, but I was quite healthy – I didn’t have a lifestyle that was indicative of cancer.” After her diagnosis, she underwent a series of chemotherapy treatments designed to eradicate the cancerous cells from her bone marrow, which left her immunocompromised and vulnerable to infection. “I went to hospital on November 7 and I didn’t leave until Christmas Eve,” she recalled.

Despite the rigorous treatment, including a third chemotherapy round that led to an initial successful eradication of the leukaemia, Knowles faced further challenges. Just before her scheduled stem cell transplant in December 2024, her health deteriorated, leading to a relapse. A subsequent physician, suggesting a “flight" to Dignitas, the assisted dying facility in Switzerland, posed an unsettling question about her options moving forward. “It became a very weird scenario in which he wouldn’t come on the phone to speak to my nurse specialist, or me,” she noted, recounting the moment she grasped the implications of the suggestion.

In November 2024, after a series of unsuccessful treatment trials, Knowles received a novel Car-T treatment—a form of immunotherapy—combined with a stem cell transplant. Initially, the results were promising with no signs of disease. However, just a week following her discharge, she was readmitted to hospital in March 2025 with complications from the transplant. It was then that she faced the devastating news that her leukaemia had returned.

“My consultant was blindsided by my relapse,” Knowles explained. Striving to maintain a semblance of normalcy amidst her health challenges, she recently completed a 20-mile walk around Fairhaven Lake on March 16, aiming to raise funds for clinical research at King’s College Hospital. The walk was part of her effort to support advancements in AML treatments, which she lamented have not seen substantial progress in nearly five decades.

“All I really miss now is going to work and training… I would just love to take the dog for a run and go to work, more than anything,” she stated while discussing her longing for her previous active lifestyle. In addition to raising over £25,000, Knowles hopes that her contribution will aid in significant research developments, expressing optimism that the research team at King’s College is on the cusp of breakthroughs in AML treatment which could particularly benefit children.

Continuing her battle against leukaemia, Knowles has commenced a new chemotherapy regime in the hopes of participating in another clinical trial. “We did almost do it, but ‘almost’ doesn’t matter,” she said, emphasising her determination to ensure that future patients—regardless of age—might have better outcomes than her own. Olivia Knowles’ journey illustrates not only the complexities of cancer treatment but also highlights the critical need for ongoing research and advancements in the field.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/my-cancer-is-now-terminal-olivia-knowles-5049164> - Corroborates Olivia Knowles' diagnosis with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML) and her fundraising efforts for King's College Hospital.
* <https://oliviaknowlespoulton.com> - Provides information about Olivia Knowles' hair and beauty salon in Poulton, highlighting her professional life before her health challenges.
* <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/acute-myeloid-leukemia.html> - Supports claims about Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) being an aggressive cancer with a poor prognosis and its impact on bone marrow and blood.
* <https://www.kch.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/our-hospitals/kings-college-hospital> - Provides details about King's College Hospital, where Olivia Knowles is supporting research, particularly in areas concerning her treatment.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/treatment/car-t-cell-therapy> - Explains Car-T cell therapy, a type of immunotherapy Olivia Knowles received as part of her treatment.
* <https://www.dignitas.ch/en> - Corroborates the mention of Dignitas in the context of assisted dying options and its operations in Switzerland.