# Two cancer journeys: George Dudnik and Liza Mann share their experiences



George Dudnik, a 36-year-old originally from Latvia, has shared his harrowing experience of being diagnosed with stage four lung cancer, a revelation that unfolded in November 2024. The fitness enthusiast and yoga instructor moved to the UK in 2008 to pursue dance studies and adopted a vegan lifestyle, maintaining what he believed to be a healthy lifestyle. However, his journey took a dark turn when he began experiencing unsettling health symptoms, beginning back in December 2023.

During the early days of his symptoms, Dudnik woke up to swollen facial features, reminiscent of mumps, and although initially concerning, he was reassured by medical professionals who attributed it to a viral infection. He recounted this experience, stating, "I woke up around 3am with a swollen face, especially behind my ears," and soon received a diagnosis that led him to take it lightly, believing it to be a minor ailment.

As the months progressed, George noticed more alarming symptoms, including sharp pains in his calf and alarming swelling in his foot and ankle. On May 29, 2024, after noticing a bizarre bubbling sensation in his throat coupled with coughing up blood, he experienced a medical emergency that required an ambulance. He described the pain he felt during this episode as "unbearable," saying it reached a point where he had to "scream" due to the agony he endured while breathing.

A series of tests later revealed the existence of blood clots in multiple areas of his body. His doctors were initially baffled and even suggested that his plant-based diet might be a contributing factor to his symptoms, ruling out cancer based on his age and health. However, a CT scan in October revealed troubling spots in his lung, leading to surgery, which ultimately confirmed the stage four diagnosis of ROS1-positive lung cancer—a rare and aggressive form considered incurable.

George described the moment when he received his diagnosis vividly, explaining, "At that moment, it was like I was underwater... my body just went numb," encapsulating the shock and despair that enveloped him. Doctors informed George that there was no available treatment to halt the progression of the cancer. He described the effect of the news as a "countdown timer had been activated," indicating how drastically his life had changed in an instant.

Anticipating chemotherapy treatments to begin shortly thereafter, George learned just days before that the cancer had mutated, rendering chemotherapy ineffectual. Instead, he commenced a regimen of Entrectinib, a therapy aimed at managing the disease rather than curing it. While he grappled with the prognosis, which prompted him to consider various alternative therapies for additional wellbeing support, he initiated a GoFundMe campaign to cover the related costs, raising approximately £7,000.

Despite the grave circumstances, George's resilience shone through as he maintained a positive outlook on life, focusing on the possibilities that lay ahead while committing to a lifestyle that includes a nutrient-rich diet and holistic practices to enhance his mental and physical health.

In a similar yet distinct tale of resilience, Liza Mann, a 36-year-old mother from Kununurra, Western Australia, revealed her struggle with an advanced bowel cancer diagnosis that surfaced in 2018. Initially seeing blood in her stools and experiencing light bloating, Liza attributed her symptoms to potentially benign conditions. However, after persistent symptoms and encouragement from her mother, she sought medical attention. A colonoscopy revealed a tumour in her lower bowel, which was confirmed to be malignant shortly thereafter.

Reflecting on her diagnosis, she noted, "I was 36. I've always been fit and healthy... everyone seems to think that bowel cancer is an old man's disease, but it’s not." Despite undergoing surgery followed by chemotherapy intended to eliminate any lingering cancer cells, Liza received devastating news on her birthday in 2020: the cancer had metastasised to her lungs, transitioning her to a terminal diagnosis of incurable cancer.

In the face of this life-altering diagnosis, Liza has remained determined to create lasting memories with her two daughters, Alexis and Sienna. She described the emotional turmoil of contemplating her prognosis, frequently addressed her struggle with questions from her children regarding her health and mortality, explaining, "How do you explain that to them? You try to be honest, but you don’t want them to stress out."

Despite battling her health issues, Liza has actively sought to raise awareness about early-onset bowel cancer, noting a concerning trend of increasing rates in younger populations. This determination stems from personal experiences, including a friend's similar struggle that led to a late diagnosis with dire consequences.

Statistics indicate a significant increase in bowel cancer incidences among those under 50 years of age in Australia, accentuating Liza's commitment to change perceptions surrounding this disease. As Liza reflects on the support she has received, including from her community and family, she continues to advocate for early detection and proper diagnosis to protect future generations.

Both stories of George Dudnik and Liza Mann underscore the unpredictable nature of cancer and the importance of vigilant health monitoring, especially among younger individuals who may not typically associate their age with significant health risks.

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

## References

* <https://www.survivornet.com/articles/yoga-instructor-swollen-face-stage-4-lung-cancer/> - This article supports George Dudnik's story of being diagnosed with stage four lung cancer, including his initial symptoms and his experiences with medical professionals before receiving the diagnosis.
* <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-george-healing-journeyfighting-stage-4-lung-cancer> - This GoFundMe page corroborates George Dudnik's efforts to fund his alternative therapies and lifestyle adjustments following his stage four lung cancer diagnosis.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZ8uIveg_Ww> - The video on this URL provides more details about George Dudnik's journey with stage four lung cancer, highlighting his resilience and approach to battling the disease.
* <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/lung-cancer/about/key-statistics.html> - This webpage from the American Cancer Society would provide general information on lung cancer statistics, which supports discussions about the prevalence and risks associated with lung cancer.
* <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/types-of-cancer/bowel-cancer/statistics-and-research> - This webpage from Cancer Council Australia provides statistics on bowel cancer, which supports the narrative about increasing rates in younger populations mentioned in Liza Mann's story.
* <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/cancer-publications/Pages/bowel-cancer.aspx> - This webpage offers information on bowel cancer, including its symptoms and the importance of early detection, which aligns with Liza Mann's experiences and advocacy.