# Bodybuilder's fight against stage 4 colon cancer and her journey to recovery



During a recent holiday in Turkey, Ann-Sofie Byberg, a 55-year-old bodybuilder, experienced severe complications that ultimately led to a life-altering diagnosis. While enjoying a long holiday, Byberg found herself unable to use the toilet for a troubling three-week period. As her condition deteriorated, she was left with only the ability to drink fluids and, feeling something was seriously wrong, she and her family made the decision to fly back home.

Upon returning to her home country, medical evaluations revealed her worst fears. By January 2024, doctors informed Byberg of a 10cm tumour growing into her vagina, confirming her diagnosis of stage 4 colon cancer. “Thousands of questions rushed through my head. Am I going to live? What happens now?” she recounted, recalling the emotional conversations with her husband about their situation.

In March 2024, Byberg underwent major surgery to receive a colostomy bag, and the following month, she started a grueling regimen of 27 days of chemotherapy and radiation. She described the treatment process as brutal, noting that even someone as physically fit as she is found the pain to be nearly unbearable. “I can honestly say that my stoma—my ‘life bag’—was the smallest problem,” she reflected. “The chemo and radiation, that was really hard... By June, I was bedridden.”

The side effects of radiation therapy not only targeted the tumour but also caused significant damage to her healthy organs, leading to complications requiring further surgical intervention. Byberg is now looking towards another operation scheduled for April 2025, which involves complex procedures including the removal of the vaginal wall connected to her colon and reconstruction using pieces from her gluteus muscles.

Despite these daunting challenges, Byberg has shown remarkable resilience. Once her health permitted, she resumed training, likening her comeback to starting from scratch with light weights. Remarkably, after just three months of recovery, she participated in Sweden’s biggest fitness event and secured third place in the championship for body press.

Adjusting to life with a colostomy bag posed its own challenges, but Byberg faced these changes with humour. “At first, I thought, hell no, I don’t want this! But once I got it, I realised—it’s not so bad,” she stated. She has found a silver lining in her situation, appreciating the newfound convenience it brings while maintaining an optimistic outlook.

Looking ahead, Byberg remains committed to her fitness journey. “I know I will be bedridden again and have to rebuild my strength from scratch,” she acknowledged, but she maintains a strong desire to return to competitive bodybuilding. “The doctors say because I was so well-trained before, I recovered quickly. So I hope it will be the same this time. I love the fitness life, and I will keep fighting,” she expressed, embodying a spirit of determination as she navigates her ongoing health challenges.

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

## References

* <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/treatment/treatment-types.html> - This URL provides general information about treatments for colon cancer, including surgery and chemotherapy, which aligns with Ann-Sofie Byberg's experience.
* <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/colostomy/basics/what-you-can-expect/bpg-20043545> - This resource explains what patients can expect when having a colostomy, including adjustments to life with a colostomy bag, similar to Byberg's experience.
* <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/types/radiation-therapy> - This page details the effects and complications of radiation therapy, which Byberg experienced during her treatment.
* <https://www.healthline.com/health/cancer/radiation-therapy-side-effects> - Healthline discusses the side effects of radiation therapy, including damage to healthy organs, aligning with Byberg's complications.
* <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/treatment/surgery.html> - This webpage describes surgical options for colon cancer, including procedures that might involve reconstruction, similar to Byberg's upcoming operation.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5414319/> - This article discusses resilience and recovery in cancer patients, highlighting the importance of psychological factors in coping with cancer treatment, reflecting Byberg's determination.
* <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/health/three-week-toilet-trouble-turkey-10066963> - Please view link - unable to able to access data