# Olivia Knowles shares her battle with acute leukaemia and the quest for better treatments



An athletic 33-year-old from Blackpool, Olivia Knowles, who was initially diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) after her symptoms were mistaken for long Covid, has shared her harrowing journey through serious health challenges and treatment options. Her struggles have included numerous relapses, extensive chemotherapy, and a controversial suggestion from a doctor regarding assisted dying.

Olivia began experiencing severe headaches and fatigue in late 2023, which prompted a visit to a private doctor who diagnosed her with what he believed was long Covid. However, a few days later, she was rushed to Blackpool A&E due to extreme toothache, which led to the shocking diagnosis of AML, a particularly aggressive form of leukaemia that often responds poorly to treatment. “It was a total shock,” she stated, expressing disbelief given her previously active lifestyle.

As her condition progressed through 2024, Olivia underwent multiple rounds of chemotherapy aimed at clearing her bone marrow of cancerous cells, which left her immunocompromised and vulnerable to infections. After a lengthy stay in the hospital, she received a stem cell transplant in December 2024 and was declared cancer-free. Unfortunately, just a week later, in March 2025, her condition relapsed, and doctors informed her that she only had a few months to live.

Amid her treatment, Olivia revealed that a consultant had perplexingly asked her if she had considered travelling to Dignitas, the assisted dying centre in Switzerland. Speaking to PA Real Life, she explained that the suggestion came as a shock, particularly since AML patients are advised to avoid flights due to the risk of infection. “I didn’t expect it to be so soon,” she said regarding her relapse, which led to a renewed wave of chemotherapy treatment and further fundraising efforts aimed at supporting clinical research.

On March 16, 2025, Olivia walked 20 miles around Fairhaven Lake, an endeavour which she undertook to raise funds for the clinical research team at King’s College Hospital. During her previous athletic weekends, she participated in 100-mile bike rides and 15-mile runs. However, during her recent fundraising walk, she was only able to manage 20 miles before having to stop, raising over £25,000 for research into AML treatment, which Olivia noted has not seen significant advancements in fifty years.

Reflecting on her normalcy that she misses, Olivia remarked, “If you could have one day, it might sound odd to some people, but I would just love to take the dog for a run and go to work, more than anything." Despite her challenges, Olivia's spirit remains focused on raising awareness and funding for AML research, hoping to facilitate advancements that might benefit future patients.

She has now begun a new chemotherapy regime with the intention of joining another clinical trial. “We did almost do it, but ‘almost’ doesn’t matter,” she stated, highlighting her commitment not just to her own health but to future patients battling similar conditions. Olivia’s ongoing fundraiser aims to support the work at King's College Hospital, further amplifying her drive to enhance treatment options for others dealing with aggressive forms of cancer like AML.

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

## References

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/leukaemia-symptoms-aml-long-covid-dignitas-b2728581.html> - This article supports the information about Olivia Knowles's journey with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML), including her misdiagnosis with long Covid and her extensive treatment process, which included chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant.
* <https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/my-cancer-is-now-terminal-olivia-knowles-5049164> - This article corroborates Olivia Knowles's story, highlighting her terminal cancer diagnosis and her determination to fundraise despite her health challenges.
* <https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/poulton-salon-boss-praises-blackpool-victoria-hospital-after-shock-leukaemia-diagnosis-4461847> - This article provides additional context on Olivia Knowles's initial diagnosis with leukaemia and her positive experience with Blackpool Victoria Hospital.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/acute-myeloid-leukaemia-aml/symptoms/> - This NHS page provides information on the symptoms of acute myeloid leukaemia (AML), which aligns with Olivia Knowles's experience of severe headaches and fatigue before her diagnosis.
* <https://www.dignitas.ch/de/startseite> - This website explains the services offered by Dignitas in Switzerland, relevant to Olivia Knowles's experience with a suggestion to consider assisted dying.
* <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/news/article/2023/clinical-research-at-king-s-college-hospital> - This link provides general information about clinical research at King's College Hospital, where Olivia Knowles is raising funds to support leukaemia research.