# Father of three shares his battle with advanced bowel cancer



Nigel Robinson, a 57-year-old father of three and a company director, has come forward with his harrowing journey following a diagnosis of advanced bowel cancer, a revelation that has profoundly impacted his life and his family's future. This disclosure comes as a powerful reminder of the importance of recognising potential health warning signs.

The active cyclist first began noticing alterations in his bathroom habits three years before his diagnosis. However, it was not until he experienced increasing discomfort that he sought medical advice, spurred on by his wife's insistence. In an interview with Bristol Live, Nigel explained, "My symptoms were simply the feeling of a need to go to the toilet a lot. I was feeling like I needed the toilet 10-20 times over a 24-hour period. I didn't actually go every time; it was the tumour in my colon that was giving me the urge. I also had a bit of weird pain below which I thought could be hemorrhoids."

At the time, he was unaware that these symptoms could signify colorectal cancer, which is typically marked by abdominal pain, altered bowel habits, or increased urgency for bowel movements. According to the NHS, anyone experiencing persistent abdominal discomfort lasting more than three weeks should consult a GP.

In seeking answers, Nigel underwent a Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT), a crucial screening procedure intended to identify blood in stools. The test result led to a colonoscopy, initially expected to last thirty minutes but extended to ninety. In a poignant moment, he recalled seeing the cancer on the monitor during the procedure. Following this, he received the life-altering diagnosis in a private room, where his first concern was whether he would still be able to cycle.

Despite his attempts to maintain a positive outlook, the situation worsened when further examinations revealed that his cancer had progressed to stage four, with metastasis to his liver. Adding to the emotional strain, Nigel received heartbreaking news on the same day; shortly after his diagnosis, he learned that his mother had passed away. "We walked out of the hospital and I got a text to say my mum had died. So strange really... stage four, 15% chance survival, how do you feel?" he said. Nigel shared that the experience felt surreal, akin to an out-of-body experience. His overriding concern was for his wife and children in the face of his own mortality.

Health professionals indicated that while a stage four diagnosis is challenging, Nigel's youth, fitness level, and available medical support provided avenues for treatment. He began a regimen of both oral and intravenous chemotherapy, leading into surgery to address a 1.9mm lesion in his liver. Throughout this journey, Nigel endured several complications, including pulmonary embolisms in both lungs and an incisional hernia.

Fortunately, Nigel's treatment proved effective, clearing him of colorectal cancer. However, in December, he was confronted with unsettling news regarding a new 35mm lesion on his liver, believed to be a byproduct of his initial cancer. This revelation arrived just before he was due for surgery to address his incisional hernia, adding further tension to his situation. He faces a follow-up assessment in April, hoping that the newly detected lesion will not be cancerous and that he can resume his daily activities.

In a bid to raise awareness about bowel cancer, Nigel has launched a GoFundMe page and is participating in Chris Hoy's Tour de 4 cycling event to support Bowel Cancer UK. Sharing his experience on this crowdfunding platform, he stated: "Unless you've been through it I guess you can only try to comprehend what it's like to be told you have stage four cancer. Your contribution will make an impact on others, whether you donate a lot or a little."

Moreover, he has taken to urging others to undergo health screenings and to seek medical attention even in the absence of symptoms. Ironically, he noted, he received his NHS screening kit while undergoing treatment, highlighting the programme intended for those over fifty-five, which he believes should be inclusive of anyone concerned about their health.

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

## References

* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer/symptoms/> - This NHS webpage provides detailed information on bowel cancer symptoms, which aligns with Nigel's experience of altered bowel habits and abdominal discomfort. It advises consulting a GP for persistent symptoms.
* <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colorectal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/staging/colorectal-cancer-staging.html> - This American Cancer Society page explains the stages of colorectal cancer, including stage four, and discusses the implications of metastasis, which Nigel faced with his cancer spreading to the liver.
* <https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/> - Bowel Cancer UK supports awareness and research for bowel cancer, which Nigel is promoting through his fundraising efforts and participation in cycling events.
* <https://www.cancer.gov/types/colorectal/patient/colon-screening-pdq> - This National Cancer Institute webpage discusses screening tests like the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) and colonoscopy that Nigel underwent for his diagnosis.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer/screening/> - This NHS page outlines the bowel cancer screening program in the UK, which Nigel received while already undergoing treatment, highlighting the age criteria and the importance of screening for early detection.