# Staffordshire woman’s prompt GP visit saves her life from stage two B-cell lymphoma



A young woman from Staffordshire, 24-year-old Beth Harris, has shared her experience with a life-threatening illness, highlighting the importance of seeking medical attention for persistent health issues. Her story emerged after she learned that what she initially dismissed as a mere cough was, in fact, a symptom of stage two B-cell lymphoma, a type of blood cancer.

Harris began experiencing a cough in February 2023 but thought it would resolve on its own. Encouraged by her mother and partner, she sought a consultation with her GP, who initially diagnosed her with a chest infection and prescribed antibiotics. "I was one of those people who thought it was just going to go away," she stated.

Despite following the treatment, her cough persisted, prompting her to return to her doctor, who expressed concern over the lack of improvement. Subsequently, she was referred to a local hospital for an X-ray and a CT scan. About two weeks later, she received the devastating news: she had stage two B-cell lymphoma.

The International Journal of Cancer explains that this condition arises when lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell, grow abnormal and form tumours. The cancer commonly manifests in areas such as the neck, groin, and thymus gland. In Harris's case, multiple lumps were discovered in her neck and chest, with one substantial tumour obstructing her heart and left lung.

Reflecting on that moment of diagnosis, Harris recalled, "You know your own body and I had a feeling when they asked me to come in and my mind instantly went to cancer." She described receiving the news as overwhelming, stating, "I remember her saying 'you've got lymphoma' and I burst into tears and zoned out."

According to Cancer Research UK, approximately 5,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with B-cell lymphoma each year. Harris later learned from her doctor that had she not sought medical help, her prognosis could have been dire. "The doctor said if I had left the cough, I would have been dead by Christmas," she noted.

Initially, Harris was informed that she would undergo a six-month chemotherapy regimen but was later advised that due to fluid accumulation around her heart—previously misidentified as a chest infection—her treatment protocol would be modified. She now expects to receive chemotherapy every other week for three months, followed by potential oral chemotherapy if the initial phase yields positive results. Doctors aim for her to be in remission by October 2023.

Despite her challenges, Harris maintains a pragmatic outlook on her situation. "I am apprehensive. But when you break it down, it doesn't seem as big and scary," she remarked. She is now vocal about the importance of vigilance regarding health symptoms, urging others to seek medical attention without delay. "If you don't feel well, get yourselves checked out," she advised, emphasising the gravity of her experience and the potential consequences of inaction.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/non-hodgkin-lymphoma/symptoms> - This page outlines the common symptoms of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, including painless swelling of lymph nodes in the neck, armpits, or groin, which aligns with Beth Harris's initial symptom of a persistent cough.
2. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/non-hodgkin-lymphoma/symptoms> - The page also discusses 'B symptoms' such as unexplained weight loss, night sweats, and fever, which are associated with lymphoma and may have been present in Beth Harris's case.
3. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/non-hodgkin-lymphoma/symptoms> - It mentions that lymphoma can cause chest pain, coughing, or trouble breathing, symptoms that can occur when lymphoma affects nodes in the chest, potentially relevant to Beth Harris's experience.
4. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/non-hodgkin-lymphoma/symptoms> - The page advises seeing a GP if a swollen lymph node does not go away after 3 to 4 weeks, underscoring the importance of seeking medical attention for persistent health issues, as Beth Harris did.
5. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/non-hodgkin-lymphoma/symptoms> - It highlights that lymphoma can cause unexplained weight loss, which may have been a concern in Beth Harris's case.
6. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/non-hodgkin-lymphoma/symptoms> - The page notes that lymphoma can cause chest pain, coughing, or trouble breathing, symptoms that can occur when lymphoma affects nodes in the chest, potentially relevant to Beth Harris's experience.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14672537/chest-infection-lymphoma-symptom-cough.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data