

My Life Living With Multiple Sclerosis and Surviving Breast Cancer



No one ever said that life was going to be easy. We all know there are bumps in the road of life. I'm a middle-aged female. I was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS when I was going through my divorce about 20 years ago.

At that time, I also lost my job. I'm not a doctor, but it's pretty well known that [stress affects the body](#). I've never been one to smoke, drink or live recklessly. I've been in pretty good shape for the most part; but, stressful events can take a toll on the body.

MS can be frustrating many times, especially to those newly diagnosed. My MS has been pretty stable over the years, except for the daily symptoms of fatigue, pain, numbness, weakness, heat intolerance, and cognitive issues that I've learned to adjust to.

As someone who's been dealing with this for a long time, I guess I've started to understand my body and how to listen to it. I try to slow down when I need to, take breaks, sometimes I need to cancel plans, or just say no to people when they ask for a favor.

Now, fast forward to September 2021. I went for my yearly mammogram. After, I was told that I needed to have a biopsy. Then I got the call. I was told that I had [triple-negative breast cancer](#).

Can you even try to imagine my reaction when I got that call about my test results? It's a very aggressive cancer, and it can spread quickly. It's considered to be harder to treat and

has a tendency to come back easily.

I was definitely in shock.

I remembered what it felt like many years ago, when I was diagnosed with MS. I felt sick, wondering if I'd be able to mentally handle all of this. Thinking about how long it took me to go through the mourning process after losing my health to MS. The feeling that I may be a burden to others. Also, not knowing how serious this cancer diagnosis would be for me – the type of cancer, the stage and treatment.

But soon after, I reminded myself of the many years I've been battling MS. Just like MS, I figured I would take this on one day at a time. I'm grateful to have a wonderful healthcare team. I also have a wonderful family and good friends. This made a huge difference – and a positive, hopeful attitude goes a long way, too.

For my cancer treatment, I needed several rounds of some of the strongest chemotherapy. I also needed surgery and many rounds of radiation therapy. That was, by far, one of the hardest things I've had to go through.

I'm happy to say that I've been told I'm cancer free as of today.

Surviving breast cancer alongside my MS journey has taught me that I'm stronger than I could have ever imagined, both physically and mentally.

People that have MS and are diagnosed with another illness like cancer (often called comorbidity) need to realize they already have some of the tools they need. They've already been through a lot and have the strength to fight. Follow your doctor's advice and keep a positive outlook, although it's OK to embrace that these are tough battles beyond words. This will help immensely.

Many blessings to all!

Editor's Note: For more information on comorbidities and MS, visit [the Society website](#).

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is proud to be a source of information on multiple sclerosis related topics. Unless otherwise indicated, the information provided is based on professional advice, published experience, and expert opinion. However, the information does not constitute medical or legal advice. For specific medical advice, consult a qualified physician. For specific legal advice, consult a qualified attorney.