

Patti Scialfa, Bruce Springsteen's Wife and Bandmate, Reveals Blood Cancer Diagnosis

Patti Scialfa has been living with multiple myeloma since 2018, the E Street rocker reveals in a new Bruce Springsteen documentary.

September 25, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Patti Scialfa, Bruce Springsteen's wife and bandmate, revealed in a new documentary that she has [multiple myeloma](#), a form of [blood cancer](#), according to [Variety](#).

In the new documentary, Road Diary: Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, which premiered at this year's Toronto Film Festival, Scialfa said she was diagnosed in 2018 and struggled to perform because of it, causing her to take a step back from touring.



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“This affects my immune system, so I have to be careful what I choose to do and where I choose to go,” Scialfa, 71, says in the film, which will stream on Hulu and Disney+ starting October 25. “Every once in a while, I come to a show or two, and I can sing a few songs onstage, and that’s been a treat. That’s the new normal for me right now, and I’m OK with that.”



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Multiple myeloma develops in plasma cells in the bone marrow. As a result, the cancer mainly affects the bones and kidneys. This form of blood cancer is caused by certain genetic mutations but is not thought to be a hereditary disease, according to the [Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation](#).

It is most common in people ages 65 and older. In fact, less than 1% of these cancers are diagnosed in people younger than 35, according to the [American Cancer Society](#).

The average lifetime risk of getting multiple myeloma is less than 1%—about 1 in 131 for women and 1 in 103 for men. This year, about 35,780 new cases of multiple myeloma are expected to be diagnosed in the United States.

Scialfa did not attend the film's premiere and has been mostly absent from the E Street Band's current world tour. She has been a member of the E Street Band since 1984 and married Springsteen in 1991. The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2014.

Treatment for multiple myeloma is not always needed immediately and usually starts when blood cell counts become too abnormal. If a person's condition is asymptomatic, which is referred to as smoldering myeloma, doctors may suggest monitoring the disease's progression before deciding to begin treatment.

Treatment options are determined based on the stage of the disease and typically include stem cell or bone marrow transplants, immunotherapies, chemotherapy or radiation. Thanks to more effective treatments, the duration of myeloma remission is increasing, and survival is improving.

[Click here](#) for a list of approved medications used to treat multiple myeloma.

A spokesperson for Scialfa said no additional information would be released on her condition, including whether she is being treated for the disease.

To read more, click [#Multiple Myeloma](#) or Cancer Health's [Basics on Multiple Myeloma](#). It reads in part:

What is multiple myeloma?

Multiple myeloma is an uncommon type of blood cancer that affects the bone marrow, where new blood cells are produced. It occurs when the body makes too many plasma cells, a type of white blood cell.

Plasma cells are mature B cells that produce antibodies. In people with multiple myeloma, abnormal plasma cells multiply in the bone marrow and make abnormal antibodies called M proteins, which can build up in the blood and organs. These abnormal plasma cells can clump together to form tumors in bones or soft tissue, and they can crowd out normal blood-forming cells. This can lead to bone fractures, low blood counts and increased risk of infection; over time, the disease can damage the kidneys and other organs.

What are the risk factors for multiple myeloma?

Multiple myeloma runs in families, but most people with the disease don't have affected family members. Radiation exposure is a known risk factor. Some research suggests that being

overweight and exposure to certain chemicals may increase the risk. Excessive production of a cell signaling molecule called interleukin-6 can trigger the development of plasma cell tumors.

How is multiple myeloma treated?

Treatment for multiple myeloma depends on how advanced it is, how much it has spread and what symptoms are present. In many cases, different types of treatment are used in combination—for example, chemotherapy plus an immunomodulator and a targeted therapy. Surgery and radiation are not usually used to treat multiple myeloma, but they may help relieve symptoms such as bone pain.

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