

Shannen Doherty Remains Optimistic as Cancer Spreads to Her Bones

"My greatest memory is yet to come," Shannen Doherty told People as she discussed her metastatic breast cancer. [VIDEO]

December 6, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

Shannen Doherty continues to receive treatment after learning that her Stage IV [breast cancer](#) has spread to her bones, the 52-year-old actress shared in the [cover story](#) for the latest issue of People. She also launched a memoir-style podcast December 6 called [Let's Be Clear with Shannen Doherty](#). Doherty also regularly shares her experiences with her over 2 million Instagram followers.

"I'm not done with living. I'm not done with loving. I'm not done with creating. I'm not done with hopefully changing things for the better," Doherty said. "I'm just not—I'm not done."



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Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women, after skin cancer. Nearly 288,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with [invasive breast cancer annually](#), and about 1 in 8 women will receive a diagnosis in their lifetime. What's more, around a quarter of women with early breast cancer will go on to develop [metastatic disease](#), meaning that the cancer has spread to other parts of the body, according to [Cancer Health's Basics on Breast Cancer](#).

In January, Doherty announced that her breast cancer had [spread to her brain](#) and that she underwent surgery to have a [tumor](#) removed from her head. "It was definitely one of the scariest things I've ever been through in my entire life," she told People.

In her cover story, Doherty candidly discussed how her eight-year journey with cancer has led her to reflect on her life and seek a "bigger purpose."



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The Beverly Hills, 90210 and Charmed alum was first diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2015; by 2016, it had spread to her lymph nodes. After undergoing chemotherapy through February 2017, she announced that she was in remission. In 2020, however, she shared that her cancer had returned and that it was Stage IV.

"People don't know a lot about cancer," Doherty said in a [video interview](#) with People, which you can view at the top of this article. "They just sort of assume that it means you can't walk, you can't eat, you can't work. People put you out to pasture at a very early age. 'You're done. You're

retired.' And we're not. We're vibrant. We have such a different outlook on life. We're just so grateful for every second, every hour, every day that we get to be here."

"We are on a really good regimen now, and it's working well for me. So [I just take things] day by day, month by month, year by year," she said.

The actress remains optimistic that she will get into a [clinical trial](#) for a new treatment. "It's about pushing through the next two, three, four, five years because in that period of time, in three to five years, there's going to be another new protocol, a new clinical trial," she said.

"My greatest memory is yet to come," she says. "I pray. I wake up and go to bed thanking God, praying for the things that matter to me without asking for too much. It connects me to a higher power and spirituality. My faith is my mantra."

For related articles, click the hashtag [#Metastatic Breast Cancer](#) and check out [Cancer Health's Basics on Breast Cancer](#). It reads in part:

What are the risk factors for breast cancer?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, besides being a woman and getting older, factors that influence the risk of developing breast cancer include:

- Genetic mutations (including BRCA1 and BRCA2)
- Family history of breast cancer
- Early onset of menstruation or early menopause
- No full-term pregnancies or first pregnancy at an older age
- Not being physically active
- Overweight or obesity, especially after menopause
- Use of oral contraceptives or hormone replacement therapy
- Previous radiation therapy
- Drinking alcohol.

What are the symptoms of breast cancer?

The most common sign of breast cancer is a lump or mass. A hard and painless mass is most likely to be malignant, but cancerous tumors can sometimes be tender, soft or painful. Other symptoms may include breast swelling, skin irritation or dimpling, breast or nipple pain, nipple retraction (turning inward), redness, scaliness or thickening of the nipples or skin of the breast and discharge from the nipple.

How is breast cancer treated?

Treatment for breast cancer depends on how advanced the cancer is when it is detected, including how many tumors there are, how large they are and whether they have spread to nearby lymph nodes or other parts of the body.

Treatment can be broken down into local and systemic therapies. Local therapies, such as surgery and radiation, treat cancer in the breast. Systemic treatments, which can reach cancer cells that have spread elsewhere in the body, typically cause more side effects.