

If Stories About Celebrity Cancer Diagnoses Upset You, Keep This in Mind

Celebrities who share their cancer diagnoses may inspire some people while triggering others.

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To the average person, [celebrities](#) may appear as if they lead perfect, glamorous lives free from struggle. But this sense of otherness may wash away when a celebrity announces that they—like millions of other people—are battling cancer.

For some people, a celebrity's disclosure of a [cancer diagnosis](#) may be a reminder that celebrities are people too, with problems and struggles like everyone else. For people currently battling cancer or in remission, such an announcement can dredge up painful memories of their own experience with cancer or stoke fears of recurrence.

In recent months, many public figures have shared their cancer diagnoses. Tennis star [Martina Navratilova](#) revealed earlier this year that she has throat and breast cancer. U.S. Representative [Jaimie Raskin](#) (D-Md.) announced in December that he had been diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma. Cheers star [Kirstie Alley](#) died of colon cancer in December. And both President Joe Biden and [First Lady Jill Biden](#) recently had basal cell carcinomas removed.

In some cases, celebrities can make a positive impact just by sharing details of a cancer screening. For example, actor Ryan Reynolds shared [his colonoscopy](#) on YouTube to encourage cancer screening and raise colon cancer awareness. [Paris Hilton](#), whose grandmother died of breast cancer, shared that she had a full-body MRI scan in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month and urged her 20.5 million Instagram followers to do the same.

Sharing cancer screening experiences not only normalizes the process but also has the potential to alleviate fears some people may have regarding such screenings.

But if you feel triggered or anxious reading headlines about celebrity cancer cases, you're not alone. Stacy Wentworth, MD, offers tips on navigating the terrain. [Writing in Psychology Today](#), she advises, "First, take a deep breath. Celebrities are humans just like the rest of us and live in broken bodies that can get cancer. Second, understand that just like any other person on social media or otherwise, they are likely not [sharing the whole story](#)."

Remember that celebrities have publicists to help curate their messages. Celebrities typically don't share the nitty-gritty details of their experiences, so their narratives often seem tidier and happier.

Wentworth also says taking the time to reflect on your own survivorship—reminding yourself of the time you spent in the hospital and the treatments you underwent—can help give you a sense of accomplishment. Finally, checking in with your oncology team for updates in the field or answers to questions you may have can be helpful.

Feelings of fear and uncertainty are valid and should be addressed with medical professionals and loved ones. Sometimes a simple conversation can change your perspective.

If you're interested in more articles about stars and their cancer stories, click [#Celebrities](#), where you'll find headlines such as "[Stars: Just Like Us, They're Fighting Cancer Too](#)," "[Rock Legends Andy Taylor and Tim Commerford Reveal Prostate Cancer Diagnoses](#)" and "[Blue Jacket Fashion Show Returns for Prostate Cancer Awareness](#)."