

Supermodel Linda Evangelista Reveals Double Mastectomy After Breast Cancer

“I don’t want it to look pretty. I want you to excavate,” said Linda Evangelista about additional surgery when the cancer returned.

October 4, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

Supermodel Linda Evangelista shared publicly for the first time that she was diagnosed with cancer twice in the last five years: [breast cancer](#) in 2018 and cancer of the pectoral muscle last year.

Evangelista, 58, who shot to global fame in the 1990s, revealed her diagnoses in an interview with [WSJ Magazine](#) published last month. Her cancer history is not slowing her down. She and photographer Steven Meisel have a new book out, *Linda Evangelista Photographed by Steven Meisel* which she has been promoting.



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A post shared by Linda Evangelista (@lindaevangelista)

Evangelista said she first discovered her breast cancer in December 2018 during an annual mammogram, according to [USA Today](#).

“The margins [of the tumor] were not good, and due to other health factors, without hesitation, because I wanted to put everything behind me and not to have to deal with this, I opted for a bilateral mastectomy. Thinking I was good and set for life,” Evangelista told WSJ Magazine. “Breast cancer was not going to kill me.”

In July 2022, she found another lump in her chest. Many doctors told her not to worry about it, but Evangelista requested an MRI as a precaution. The MRI showed cancer in the pectoral muscle. For treatment, she underwent chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Evangelista didn’t mince words when she told her surgeon not to worry about the cosmetic outcome of the surgery.

“Dig a hole in my chest,” she recalled telling her doctor. “I don’t want it to look pretty. I want you to excavate. I want to see a hole in my chest when you’re done. Do you understand me? I’m not dying from this.”

In January, fellow 1990s supermodel [Tatjana Patitz died of metastatic breast cancer](#) at age 56. Both women appeared in George Michael’s iconic video for “Freedom! 90.”

Evangelista said her prognosis is good but not great because she has a higher risk of recurrence, which is reflected in the fact she has “a horrible oncotype score,” also known as a recurrence score.

“I know I have one foot in the grave, but I’m totally in celebration mode,” she said of currently being cancer-free.

Evangelista appears in the new docuseries The Super Models on Apple TV. Here’s the official trailer:

October marks [National Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#). To read a collection of related articles, click [#Breast Cancer](#). To learn more about the topic, see Cancer Health’s [Basics on Breast Cancer](#). It reads in part:

Who gets breast cancer?

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women, after skin cancer. Nearly 300,000 women are diagnosed with invasive cancer annually, according to the American

Cancer Society. Men can also develop breast cancer, but this is rare. People with [BRCA mutations](#) are at high risk for breast cancer.

Around a quarter of women with early breast cancer will go on to develop metastatic disease [meaning the cancer has spread]. About 15% of breast cancer patients have hard-to-treat triple-negative breast cancer, which is more common among young women and Black women.

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.