Tennis Icon Martina Navratilova Diagnosed With Throat and Breast Cancer

"This double whammy is serious but still fixable," said tennis legend Martina Navratilova, who was treated for breast cancer in 2010.

January 3, 2023 By Trent Straube

Tennis legend Martina Navratilova has been diagnosed with Stage I throat cancer along with an unrelated breast cancer, according to a statement posted on WTATennis.com, the website of the Women's Tennis Association.

The breast cancer was discovered during the exams for her throat cancer, according to the statement, which added that Navratilova's throat cancer is associated with the human papillomavirus (HPV) and is one of the more treatable cancers.

"This double whammy is serious but still fixable, and I'm hoping for a favorable outcome," Navratilova, 66, said. "It's going to stink for a while, but I'll fight with all I have got."

The throat cancer was diagnosed after she discovered an enlarged lymph node in her neck in November and had it biopsied.

This isn't the first time Navratilova has faced cancer. In 2010, the sports legend, who has won 59 grand slam titles, was diagnosed with noninvasive breast cancer. She was included in a 2017 Cancer Health slideshow titled "14 Celebrities Who Show There's Life After Breast Cancer." Her entry read:

> Martina Navratilova
>
> Considered one of the best female tennis players of all time, the Czech-born legend announced in April 2010 that she was being treated for breast cancer after it was detected via a routine mammogram. She called the diagnosis "my personal 9/11," adding, "I have been healthy all my life and all of a sudden I have cancer. Are you kidding me?" She had a lumpectomy followed by radiation. She partly faulted herself for going four years without a mammogram and encouraged women to get theirs. Six months after publicly revealing her diagnosis, Navratilova announced that she was cancer-free.

> At 63, Navratilova reflected on her diagnosis with The Telegraph: “I’d depended on my body my whole life—I’d treated it well and it had treated me well in return, so the diagnosis felt like a betrayal of sorts.” In May 2019, she joined seven other female celebrities in a live and televised striptease to help raise breast cancer awareness, saying, “the cause was so worthwhile I had to go for it.”

On her Twitter feed, Navratilova has pinned the tweet below. It’s of a December 2017 YouTube video of herself with the caption: “Watch my story to learn how #breastcancer shifted my perception of time #MyTimeOurTime.”

Watch my story to learn how #breastcancer shifted my perception of time. #MyTimeOurTime https://t.co/QT13ibKkjM

— Martina Navratilova (@Martina) December 6, 2017

The video is part of a campaign by pharmaceutical company Novartis to support people with breast cancer. You can view the video at the top of this article and on YouTube.

“I got the [original breast cancer] diagnosis when I was in Aspen,” she says in the video. “After that, everything shifts. You realize your life can change in a nanosecond, so that ‘seize the day’ thing definitely applies…. I’m always good about dealing with reality and getting on with it, not worrying about too many possibilities. Just what is now, let’s deal with it. That’s where tennis training comes in handy, you need to deal with the ball, the ball is right here. You don’t think about anything else. Being a top-level athlete, a pro athlete, you learn to be positive. So that came in very handy as a patient. Being a positive person helped a lot, and surround yourself with positive people as well.”

On Monday, after her double diagnosis made global headlines, she tweeted, “Needless to say my phone and twitter are both blowing up so I will say again- thank you all for your support and I am not done yet:)

Xoxoxo”

Needless to say my phone and twitter are both blowing up so I will say again- thank you all for your support and

I am not done yet:)

Xoxoxo

— Martina Navratilova (@Martina) January 2, 2023

To read more articles about the types of cancer Navratilova has been diagnosed with, click #Breast Cancer and #Throat Cancer. You'll find headlines such as "Racial Disparities Found in HPV-Related Throat Cancers" and "Breast Cancer Screening: Making Sense of Conflicting Advice."

And visit the Cancer Health Basics on Breast Cancer, for more information about the second most prevalent cancer (after skin cancer) among women in the United States.

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