

HEALTH

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5 ways to treat hair loss

1 MINOXIDIL has been shown to slow hair loss in men and women and is available without a prescription.

2 Prescription-only medication Finasteride blocks hormones that cause hair loss and may trigger new hair growth.

DIARY OF A WIFE WHOSE HUSBAND HAS Behind all the positive quotes and smiling pics, Catherine Zeta-Jones will be going through hell



AMANDA WALTON knows exactly what Hollywood star Catherine Zeta-Jones is going through.

Her husband Paul is also battling throat cancer, just like Catherine's Oscar-winning hubby Michael Douglas.

The movie legend, 65, left with Catherine, was diagnosed after discovering a walnut-sized tumour

at the base of his tongue. He hopes to make a full recovery despite the very real possibility he will lose his voice.

Paul, 46, a former AA man, was diagnosed two years ago.

The couple, who live in Highworth, Wilts, vowed to beat the disease, which strikes more than 5,000 men in the UK each year.

Here, Amanda, 42, reveals her intimate diary of Paul's cancer battle.

WWW

GOT a health problem or wellbeing worry you want help with? Sun doc Carol Cooper will be online on Monday at 6pm to answer all your questions. To submit your query go to thesun.co.uk/health.

Did you know..

OUR wisdom teeth may help us live for ever.

Scientists in Japan have discovered that the teeth, which many have removed, are packed with stem cells. These cells can turn into any body cell and be used to replace worn-out body parts such as joint cartilage.

The team are now working on re-programming these teeth stem cells to make other body parts.

MARCH 26, 2008

PAUL finally had his operation at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford to remove a "benign cyst" from the side of his neck.

It had reared its ugly head on New Year's Day.

We'd been told it was just a minor op, so I got a shock when Paul came out of theatre.

He looked terrible with a long line of black and bloodied stitches round the bottom of his neck.

I tried to make a joke out of it and told him: "You look like Frankenstein."

APRIL 11

This day will be forever engraved on my mind - this is the day our world changed.

Today we were told Paul has cancer.

The cyst they removed over two weeks ago wasn't a cyst. It was a cancerous tumour.

When the surgeon told us the news, Paul and I sat there holding hands like two stone statues.

The doctor told us our world would become a "whirlwind" over the next six weeks and we'd be practically living at the hospital.

Not only was it cancer but it was a secondary tumour, meaning the cancer had spread from somewhere else in Paul's head and neck.

When we got home, I cried gut-wrenching tears but Paul was amazingly dignified about it all.

Writing this now, I still can't believe the man I love more than anything in the whole wide world - the man I'd waited all my life to meet - has cancer.

APRIL 22

The "whirlwind" began today. Paul had a scan in a large metal doughnut-shaped machine.

When he came out he wasn't allowed to hug me for eight hours because he was actually radioactive!

APRIL 24

Back at the hospital. The doctor said: "Looking at the results of the scan, we think the primary tumour is on the back of the tongue."

He said they may have to remove it.

Paul told them: "I'm keeping my tongue. It's as simple as that!"

I begged him to reconsider... that I'd love him just the same. But there wasn't much time to argue.

Within 12 hours we were back at the hospital at the crack of dawn so Paul could have an emergency operation to take biopsies (tissue samples) from his mouth, throat and tongue.

APRIL 29

Today we went back to the hospital for the results. My heart was thumping - I could hear my pulse in my ears.

One of Paul's surgeons was looking puzzled but happy.

With soaring hearts we listened as he explained that, much to their surprise, they hadn't found any cancer - not a speck.

Paul squeezed my hand so tightly I could feel him shaking.

But the surgeon was more cautious than celebratory. He explained it was very unusual they couldn't find where the cancer had come from but it

could be that Paul's own immune system had got rid of the original tumour.

We drove home from the hospital and felt like we were flying.

When I switched on the radio, Culture Club's It's A Miracle was playing.

Tears of relief poured down my face.

JULY 16, 2009

It has been over a year since Paul was treated for cancer.

He went back to work last September because our financial situation had almost brought us to our knees.

Our situation is depressingly common - cancer patients across the country struggle with huge financial burdens.

A week ago Paul had another routine scan and today we got the results - and it's not good news.

One of Paul's surgeons said he was "95 per cent certain there is cancer on the back of the tongue".

He went in for another painful biopsy.

AUGUST 17

Today we got the best news ever.

At 1.30pm Graham Cox, the surgeon who performed Paul's biopsy operation, called to give us the all-clear and tell us that there doesn't appear to be a "sizeable tumour anywhere".

Finally, the Grim Reaper has been banished from our home!

JUNE 8, 2010

A week ago Paul went for a routine check-up at the head and neck clinic. Paul showed the

doctor a small lump on the side of his neck just above his scar.

He'd noticed it a few weeks ago, but neither of us was worried.

After all, Paul's been free of cancer for more than two years now.

But, just to be on the safe side, the doctor said they would take some sample cells from the lump.

Today they told us the lump was cancerous.

Unlike the first time we were told Paul had cancer, I wasn't frozen with shock but filled with rage.

I looked at Paul and knew what he was feeling inside. After five years of barely a day apart, I can read my husband's face at a glance.

The surgeon explained Paul would need a major operation followed by six weeks of intensive radiotherapy.

He'd also need a scan to see if the cancer was "localised". It was then it dawned on us both that they think it may have spread.

We drove back home in a daze. We thought we were at the end of

our cancer journey. But within the space of a week, we'd been propelled back again and are preparing for the avalanche of scans, surgery and treatments that follows a cancer diagnosis.

JUNE 24

I rang up Paul's designated cancer nurse, a lovely young girl called Vanessa, but I can hear she's run ragged.

I tell her a date has finally been set for Paul's CT scan but it's been scheduled for the day of his operation.

She asks if I could ring radiology and sort it out as she's so busy.

The head and neck department have gone from having four cancer nurses to just three. Also, one of the surgeons has left and is not being replaced.

Paul and I both agree, the NHS is on its knees.

JUNE 28

We had to wait for three hours for Paul to have his CT scan at the John Radcliffe as one of their machines had broken down.

BRAVE... Amanda Walton with her diary of Paul's cancer battle



3 HIGH doses of zinc may help you stop losing locks but there can be side effects. See your GP before taking it.

4 Tretinoin is a high-strength form of vitamin A and, used as cream, may help you maintain a full head of hair.

5 Corticosteroid creams may help your hair. They're available from GPs but have side effects if used long term.

1 MORE PAGE

BEEN FIGHTING CANCER FOR TWO YEARS



BLISS... happier days for Paul and Amanda on their wedding day in 2006

When Paul finally had his scan done after drinking a bucket of dye solution and having a contrast pumped into his veins to get a more detailed image.

I noticed that the fragile old woman slumped in a wheelchair in a corridor on her own is still there from earlier on.

My heart goes out to her. She looks so vulnerable and lost.

When we get home we both have a bath. The familiar stench of the hospital feels like it's oozing out of our pores.

JULY 1

It's Paul's 46th birthday and doctor Mr Potter said he would call us today with the results of the CT scan, which will tell us if there are any more tumours in Paul's body.

We wait in all day but Mr Potter doesn't call.

I tried calling the hospital but just got answering machines.

JULY 2

Mr Potter finally rang at 2.30pm and made a half-hearted apology for not calling yesterday, saying he'd been really busy due to staff shortages.

He said the scan didn't show up any more tumours in Paul's body but they're concerned about an enlarged lymph node on the other side of his neck, which could possibly be cancer.

Paul now has to have a PET-CT scan which is a different type of scan and will show up any cancerous cells.

JULY 6

While Paul's having his scan today I ring our mortgage lenders Nationwide and ask for a six-month holiday from our mortgage. They hear the word

cancer and won't give us any longer than three months. I tell them that won't even get us to the end of Paul's radiotherapy. I beg but they won't budge. I put the phone down and cry tears of anger and frustration.

JULY 8

Mr Potter did call today to tell Paul they were postponing his major operation and want him to have a biopsy first - and that he may need chemo!

Does this mean the cancer has spread to his body? Not surprisingly our minds have now gone into overdrive.

We are very worried.

JULY 13

Paul went to get the results of the PET-CT scan today.

His doctor, Mr Bond said the left lymph node is not cancerous but there are two patches of cancer near the tumour on the right-hand side of the neck.

The scan also showed a "hot spot" at the base of Paul's tongue.

He wants to do a biopsy to see if this is cancer or not and has told Paul he now thinks the best way forward is to scrap the major operation and try to kill this horrible disease with a combination of radiotherapy and chemo.

JULY 19

Paul had his biopsy today and when I went to pick him up from the transfer lounge - it makes it sound like an airport - he looked gaunt and as white as a sheet. On the way out, we bumped into one of his friends.

He looked really shocked when he saw Paul. It made me see my husband through an outsider's eyes. I too was shocked.

JULY 22

Good news! They couldn't find any cancer on the tongue.

We're both relieved and feel it's the best case scenario.

I feel there is hope and that I'll get to keep Paul for a good while longer.

JULY 28

Paul had a sample of his sperm frozen today just in case we want to have a third shot at IVF.

It's a strange feeling that after the chemo he's going to be sterile.

No chance of falling pregnant naturally now - something else the cancer has taken away.

AUGUST 5

Paul had his mask made today in preparation for the radiotherapy, followed by another CT scan.

He's even had a dot tattooed on his chest so the machine can align itself properly.

It's the only tattoo Paul has ever had and it's a constant reminder of what's in store.

AUGUST 18

When will this rollercoaster ride ever end?

The oncologist (cancer specialist) seems to be convinced the back of Paul's tongue may well be cancerous.

They want to zap him here as well, which means after a few weeks of treatment he'll hardly be able to swallow, never mind eat.

Because of this, they've scrapped the chemo and suggested he has a tube fitted into his stomach to get food into him.

SEPTEMBER

I have just been reading that Michael Douglas has got head and neck cancer.

When I saw his photo in the paper I felt for him and Catherine Zeta-Jones because I know only too well what they're going through.

Behind the positive quotes and smiling photographs, I know they'll both be going through hell - physically and mentally.

Like Michael, Paul's just about to start his six weeks of radiotherapy.

I'm just hoping it passes as painlessly and as quickly as possible. In the meantime we've resolved to just enjoy the here and now as much as possible, and love each other like we always have done - and more.

When a cancer comes back, it can be soul-destroying and you really do feel very battle-worn.

I feel like I'm dropping to my knees with mental exhaustion. And I know Paul does too.

I'm obviously anxious about the radiotherapy as it has some pretty unpleasant side effects.

There's nothing worse than seeing the person you love going through pain and suffering.

Having said that, I feel incredibly relieved - and dare I say it lucky - that the cancer has not spread to anywhere else in Paul's body.

● Paul and Amanda have been getting support from their local Maggie's Centre, a cancer support charity. To make a donation or find out more, go to maggiescentres.org or call 0300 123 1801.

GIRL WHO'S ALLERGIC... TO WATER

By ALAN HURNDALL

AT the end of a long day working as a butcher, Lisa Melland would like nothing more than a relaxing soak in the tub.

But however hot and bothered she gets, the thought of even washing her face fills her with dread. For Lisa, 27, has a one in a hundred million medical condition - she is allergic to WATER.

She is one of only a handful of humans whose bodies have rebelled against life's most vital ingredient. Even just a few splashes can cause her skin to flare up, itch and burn. Sometimes she scratches until she bleeds.

Lisa, of Bakewell, Derbyshire, developed aquagenic urticaria seven years ago.

She says: "I'm told there are only 40 cases in the world. It started out of the blue. I suddenly found that washing brought me out in a rash over my arms, trunk and upper body. I thought there must be some chemical in our supply, but the same thing happened when I came into contact with any water."

Since then, life has become a misery.

Getting wet is a no-no. She carries a fold-up umbrella in her handbag in case it rains and has to use wipes to clean her hands and face. Swimming is out of the question and even tears bring out blotches on her face.

The skin usually takes a couple of hours to settle down and it never clears entirely. She braves a quick shower in the evening then sits smothered in hypoallergenic E45 cream, waiting for her body to return to normal.

Dust

Doctors and skin specialists are baffled by the allergy. She says: "I remember the first visit to a dermatologist. He literally blew the dust off an old medical encyclopedia to discover what my allergy was. Since then, all the medics have treated me as a guinea pig."

Nina Goad of the British Association Of Dermatologists says: "Aquagenic urticaria might be associated with elevated blood histamine levels, but there are other processes at work. There is no known cure and the precise causes remain unclear."

Lisa has been prescribed endless pills and potions, anti-histamine drugs, tried Chinese medicine, homeopathy, washed in distilled water, filtered water, boiled water, even salt seawater but the problem has got worse.

Lisa and husband Ian, who work in the family farm shop at Dranfield Woodhouse, Derbys, have put much of their life on hold in the hope that her misery can somehow be ended.

Their personal and social lives have suffered. They sleep in separate beds as physical contact can be so uncomfortable for Lisa.

She says: "I'm hoping one morning I might wake up and find that whatever it is that's causing my condition has stopped."

BAFFLING... contact with water makes Lisa's skin flare up and become painful

