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# Cough Cough Campaign

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## Cough Cough Campaign

Posted on Tuesday 25th September 2012

### Alissa shares here experience of lung cancer for Cough Cough campaign

When Alissa Law and her father Mick Turner started with coughs in the early spring they put it down to a chest infection. However 15 months later Alissa had lost her father and part of her own lung to cancer.

Life-long non-smokers, the father and daughter thought they had minor chest infections, but sought medical advice.

Alissa, 43 from Greenodd, Ulverston said: "Everyone commented on the cough I had, and I just thought it's only a cough. I went to my GP and took several courses of different antibiotics but it wouldn't go.

"When I lay down in bed I could hear the bubbling in my chest. Because I have never smoked and I was just 41 years old at the time lung cancer wasn't something that we expected. I didn't meet the criteria. After going back again to my doctor he arranged for me to have a chest x-ray at the surgery.

"The radiologist took the x-ray then asked if he could take it again which he did. I became concerned, as my grandfather had died of a lung condition when he was 42.

"A couple of days after the x-ray I got a call from my GP with the results. They could see an area in the lung which looked like a serious infection. They thought it could have been pneumonia which can leave a scar for sometime after the infection has cleared up. I was put back onto antibiotics and had three more x-rays over the next couple of months to monitor the situation.

"By mid-September there was no improvement showing on the x-rays so I was referred to the lung specialist at Furness Hospital. After more x-rays he called me back at the beginning of October to carry out a guided biopsy where lung tissue is removed through a small incision in the side of my chest. It was just a day appointment. Two days later I was asked to go back to Furness Hospital and the letter suggested I took someone with me. It was then that they told me I had lung cancer. I remember just screaming. All I could say was 'I've got a little boy, he's only 10, and he needs me.'

"All I could think about was how I was going to tell my Mum and Dad.

"Dad was an ex-police sergeant. He didn't know when I told him and Mum that I had lung cancer, that he also had it.

"My next appointment was at Preston Hospital a few days later, where I had a full body scan to check if the cancer had spread anywhere else. They didn't know until then if it was primary or secondary.

"Although the results were available a few days later the wait seemed like forever. I had an appointment to see the specialist at Blackpool where I was told the cancer hadn't spread. My Mum and two aunts came with me. None of us knew that while we were going to Blackpool that my Dad had arranged to have an x-ray on his chest at Furness Hospital at the same time.

"I was told I had two choices chemotherapy and radiotherapy or surgery to remove the cancer. Because I had Bronchioloalveolar carcinoma the specialist felt surgery was the best option.

"It was November 9, 2010 when I was diagnosed and November 16 when I had this first appointment in Blackpool. They said that they didn't know if it would be part or the entire lung which would have to be removed as the tumor was lying low.

"Before the operation I went back to Blackpool for the pre-operative assessment and to see the anaesthetist. As I was worried he asked me if I wanted to see the intensive care room where I would wake up and told me more about what would happen. It really helped me cope.

“On November 29 I had the operation. I went in holding a little teddy bear my son had given me. It said to the Best Mum. When I woke up the first thing I saw was the teddy. The nurses had bandaged him up just like me and placed him next to me.

“I was in hospital for five days before being transferred home where my recovery took six months.

“I was home for Christmas, and all I could think was ‘is this the last time I will see my little boy open his presents.’

“My Dad still had his cough and I kept saying he should go to see the specialist. He and my mother knew he had cancer then but didn’t tell me as I was still recovering.

“I was worried about having chemotherapy after the operation, but the Lung Specialist Nurse told me I didn’t need further treatment. I had no idea at the time that she was treating my Dad.

“However in January my Dad called me, my brother and his wife together and told us he had lung cancer’.

“My first response was ‘When are you having the operation to remove it.’ It was then that he told me it wasn’t operable, it wasn’t curable but it was manageable - he had already had his first course of chemotherapy treatment.

“He appeared to be a fit and healthy man. He was just 63 years old. He had chemotherapy, but on June 4, his birthday he was rushed into hospital with breathing difficulties. At the time I had a chest infection so I wasn’t allowed to go into see him in hospital. He died a week later on June 12. A blood clot had travelled to his brain.

“He had a different type of lung cancer. He had Adenocarcinoma lung cancer.”

Alissa initially had to go for checkups every three months, however at her last appointment in March this was changed to every 9 months.

She added: “One of the important things which helped me get through this very difficult time by the amazing support from my family and friends to whom I am very grateful to them all.

“I am very concerned about any coughs now, and go straight to the doctor. The sooner your lung cancer is diagnosed and treated the better your chances of surviving.

“I now walk miles and miles each week, and I am probably fitter than before I had lung cancer.”

NHS Cumbria is again running it’s Cumbria Cough Cough lung cancer awareness campaign to encourage people to know what the symptoms are and seek help early. The earlier lung cancer is caught the better a person’s chances of longer term survival.

Anyone experiencing any of the common symptoms of lung cancer should seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The symptoms of lung cancer include:

- persistent coughing for several weeks
- unexplained weight loss
- shortness of breath
- chest pain
- blood in phlegm

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## Latest news

■ **Community Stroke Prevention event in Whitehaven on 14 June**  
Monday 10th June 2019

■ **Next Governing Body Meeting to take place on Wednesday 5 June 2019**  
Wednesday 29th May 2019