

Jane Fonda Begins Treatment for Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma

“This is a very treatable cancer,” says Oscar-winning actress Jane Fonda, who will start chemotherapy for non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

September 7, 2022 By Laura Schmidt

Jane Fonda has announced that she has been diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and will be undergoing chemotherapy treatment. A cancer that affects the lymphatic system—including lymph nodes and bone marrow—lymphoma occurs when white blood cells of the immune system grow out of control.

“This is a very treatable cancer,” Fonda, 84, wrote in an [Instagram post](#). “80% of people survive, so I feel very lucky. I’m also lucky because I have health insurance and access to the best doctors and treatments. I realize, and it’s painful, that I am privileged in this. Almost every family in America has had to deal with cancer at one time or another and far too many don’t have access to the quality health care I am receiving and this is not right.”



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Jane Fonda (@janefonda)

The two-time Oscar winner and star of the hit Netflix series *Grace and Frankie* said she will undergo chemotherapy treatment for six months and assured fans that her passions will not be cast aside. “I am handling the treatments quite well and, believe me, I will not let any of this interfere with my climate activism,” she wrote in her Instagram post.

Non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) is among the most common cancers in the United States and accounts for about 4% of all cancers, according to the [American Cancer Society](#).

Although commonly diagnosed in children, teens and young adults, the risk of developing NHL increases throughout life. In fact, people 65 years and older make up nearly half of NHL patients. About 80,470 people will be diagnosed with NHL in 2022, including adults and children.

NHL symptoms vary according to the type and location of the lymphoma. Medical professionals warn that some of the symptoms of NHL could be caused by other conditions, including infections. Some [common symptoms and signs](#) include enlarged lymph nodes, weight loss, chills, chest pain or pressure, fatigue, shortness of breath or cough, easy bruising or bleeding, weight loss and severe or frequent infections.

NHL is [usually treated](#) with chemotherapy or radiotherapy. In cases where the cancer is low grade or slow-growing, patients may opt for a wait-and-see approach to avoid undergoing unnecessary treatment.

“Cancer is a teacher and I’m paying attention to the lessons it holds for me,” Fonda wrote. “One thing it’s shown me already is the importance of community. Of growing and deepening one’s community so that we are not alone.”

Cancer Health’s [#Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma](#) tag offers a collection of articles on this type of cancer. You’ll find headlines such as “[Jeff Bridges Is ‘Feeling Good’ Despite Getting COVID-19 After Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma](#),” “[New Studies Highlight How Immunotherapies Are Transforming Care for Blood Cancers](#)” and “[A Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma Diary: Avie Barron](#).”

There are several types of lymphoma. To learn more, see the [Cancer Health Basics on Lymphoma](#). Here’s a selection from that Basics:

What is lymphoma?

Lymphoma occurs when white blood cells of the immune system grow out of control. It can involve B cells, T cells or natural killer cells, three kinds of lymphocytes. There are two main types, Hodgkin lymphoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, each of which has multiple subtypes. Lymphoma can often be put into remission and in many cases can be cured, but untreated, fast-growing lymphoma can be life-threatening.

Lymphoma begins in the lymphatic system—a network of lymph vessels and organs that play a role in immune function and waste removal—but it can spread throughout the body, a process known as metastasis. It may arise in lymph nodes, bone marrow (the spongy tissue inside bones that produces blood cells), the tonsils (immune organs at the back of the throat), the thymus (an organ in the chest where T cells develop), the spleen (an organ near the stomach that stores and recycles blood cells) or lymph tissue in the stomach and intestines.

What are the types of lymphoma?

In Hodgkin lymphoma, large abnormal lymphocytes (usually B cells) called Reed-Sternberg cells build up in the lymph nodes. Most people in developed countries have what is known as the classic type. It typically starts in lymph nodes in the chest, armpits or neck. It may spread through lymph vessels to other lymph nodes, but it usually does not spread elsewhere in the body. It generally responds well to treatment and can often be cured.

Non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) usually involves B cells, but T cells may also be affected. NHL may be either aggressive (fast-growing) or indolent (slow-growing). It is further classified according to the type of lymphocyte involved, how the cells look and their biomarkers or genetic characteristics.

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) is the most common type of aggressive NHL in the United States, making up nearly a third of all lymphoma cases. A subset of DLBCL, primary mediastinal B-cell lymphoma, starts in the chest and mainly affects young women. DLBCL requires prompt treatment because it grows rapidly, but response is generally good.