

‘I underwent years of treatment for cancer I didn’t have’

When Megan Royle was given a life-changing diagnosis, she never expected to receive an even more distressing one

Noticing a mole on her arm looked different, Megan Royle knew immediately to get it checked out. Following a biopsy, Megan received the earth-shattering news that she had melanoma. With no time to waste, doctors quickly gave the 29-year-old the option to freeze her eggs, knowing that immunotherapy would affect her fertility if she ever wanted to try for children.

But 18 months after her diagnosis and after undergoing gruelling treatment, Megan was given news that shocked her to the core: she’d never had skin cancer in the first place.

Following the devastating news, Megan won two out-of-

court settlements. She says, “It was incredibly life-altering and unbelievable, but I refuse to let it rule my happiness.”

MELANOMA

In November 2019, Megan, from Yorkshire, was at home with her dad when she started scratching her arm. She says, “A mole on my arm – that wasn’t new – had recently become itchy and had grown slightly.” Without hesitating, Megan booked an appointment with her GP, who looked at her mole and referred her to see a dermatologist at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital for further examination. She explains, “There, a dermatologist took a biopsy of my mole to determine



She underwent fertility treatment and immunotherapy

whether it was cancerous or not.” A week later, Megan received a call from the hospital – and was told to take her dad with her. When they arrived, she was told she had melanoma – a form of skin cancer. She says, “The world felt like it had stopped spinning. I was shocked. I was pale and had lots of freckles, but I’d always been careful in the sun.”

TREATMENT

That month, Megan, now 34, went to her first appointment at The Royal Marsden Hospital’s specialist cancer unit, where the mole sample had been reviewed again. She says, “The consultant said I’d need surgery to remove it, alongside immunotherapy to prevent the cancer from returning in the future. I was also told that there would be a chance the

treatment would affect my fertility. Although I wasn’t thinking about kids, I did want to be a mum at some point, so I opted to undergo treatment to preserve my fertility.”

A week later, Megan underwent a 2cm-wide excision of tissue to remove the cancer and the surrounding area. She says, “The recovery was painful and I was left with a long line of stitches on my arm. I was also unable to do my job as a theatrical make-up artist.”

In January 2020, Megan began the process to freeze her eggs. She says, “I underwent an uncomfortable surgical procedure to retrieve my eggs. But thankfully, they managed to successfully freeze 11 of them. I’d never suffered any form of depression or anxiety before, but after my diagnosis, I felt a mix of emotions –

including anger and sadness.” In February 2020, Megan started immunotherapy and suffered the physical side effects of treatment. She says, “I felt nauseous most days and rashes appeared all over my body. During the nine cycles I had to endure, the Covid lockdown came into effect, which meant I couldn’t take anyone to hospital with me.” Megan then moved to Yorkshire, but had to complete the rest of

her treatment at The Royal Marsden Hospital in London. After months of gruelling immunotherapy, in February 2021, Megan was given the all-clear. She says, “I was told I’d need CT and MRI scans to check the cancer hadn’t come back.” It was at this stage that Megan transferred her follow-up care to a hospital closer to where she was living. Then, in December 2021, Megan and her dad attended

her first check-up at a hospital in Leeds. Although she feared the worst, Megan was told the shock news that following rounds of behind-the-scenes testing, she’d actually been misdiagnosed. She explains, “The doctor said his team disagreed with The Royal Marsden, so sent my sample off to be tested somewhere else – and discovered I’d never had cancer in the first place. I wanted to feel relief, but

I didn’t. Instead, I felt confused. Those I told said it was great news, but it didn’t feel that way. It was the strangest day. Had I not moved away, I’d still have been living with the worry of the cancer returning.”

APOLOGIES

Although Megan, who’s currently single, had preserved 11 of her eggs, she was told her fertility could be affected for up to five years. Megan sought legal advice in January 2021 and an independent pathologist confirmed the samples showed no cancer.

In October 2023, she won an out-of-court settlement from the two NHS trusts involved. Both issued separate public apologies. However, Megan admits that no amount of money will compensate for the physical and emotional pain she went through. She says, “I still haven’t had an explanation as to how and why this happened. For a while I wasn’t in a great place, but over time I’ve learned not to hold any anger and have moved on. Now I understand what a relief it is, as my friends and family said.”

Currently, Megan is on an international theatre tour with *The Sound Of Music* and living life to the fullest. She adds, “I’m incredibly grateful to be happy and healthy.”

By Danielle Lett and Clare Mullooly



‘I WANTED TO FEEL RELIEF, BUT I DIDN’T. INSTEAD, I FELT CONFUSED’

She had her mole removed



Megan’s arm after surgery



Megan in hospital