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Media Release

Women urged to take up offer of 'lifesaving' cervical screening test

A mum of three whose smear test identified she had cervical cancer is urging women to make sure they take up the offer of a cervical screening test.

Nyssa Edwards, 40, from Pilton in Somerset, had not had any symptoms of cervical cancer before she went for her screening.

"The test saved my life, it's as simple as that," she said. "I was 39 at the time, hadn't had any symptoms and had no reason to expect that the screening would pick up anything, but it found I had abnormal cells.

"The cells were removed and further tests showed it was cancer."

Nyssa underwent a radical hysterectomy after which it was found the cancer had spread to her lymph nodes and womb.

She then began a programme of chemotherapy and radiotherapy at the RUH which was followed later by brachytherapy treatment – a type of internal radiation therapy - at the Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre.

In September last year, Nyssa's oncologist gave her the fantastic news that the treatment had gone well and that the cancer had gone.

"It was incredible to hear that news – I was just completely stunned," she said. "Throughout all the treatment you're just hoping that it will work and that you get to hear that news at the end of it all.

"The treatment I received at the RUH was fantastic, particularly from the Radiotherapy team, which was so supportive and helpful all the way through.

“I’m just so relieved that I made sure I attended my smear test. If I hadn’t, the cancer could have spread even further and it could have been a very different outcome for me.

“My message to women would be to please make sure you go for your test when you are invited. It really could save your life - without a doubt it saved mine.”

In the middle of her treatment, Nyssa even found the time to get married to her long-term partner, Tom.

“We’d had to postpone our original wedding date because of my hysterectomy and I was determined we wouldn’t postpone it again. I actually had a radiotherapy session on the morning of my wedding!”

Nyssa will continue to have surveillance check-ups for the next three years and is also being supported by the RUH’s cancer rehab team.

“I’d be lying if I said I don’t worry the cancer will come back,” said Nyssa. “But the local Macmillan Cancer Support group has been a great help and very supportive and the RUH team will be helping me with my ongoing physical and mental recovery.

“It’s been a long, tough journey but I’m staying positive and looking forward to the future.”

Cervical Cancer Prevention Week takes place from 23 – 29 January. You can find more information about the week and cervical cancer on the Jo’s Cervical Cancer Trust website - <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/>

You can find more information about smear tests on the NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening/>

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Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we’re proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.



Royal United Hospitals Bath

NHS Foundation Trust

We're currently building a new Cancer Centre at the RUH. The Dyson Cancer Centre, which is set to open in autumn 2023, will help transform the care we provide for patients, families and carers.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk