

Update From Rep. Jamie Raskin: Chemo Extinguished My Cancer

Plus: Watch lawmaker Raskin “ring the bell” after completing 6 rounds of 5-day chemo sessions to treat diffuse large B-cell lymphoma.

April 27, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

UPDATE, APRIL 27: U.S. Representative Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) announced last week that he has completed his last round of chemotherapy for diffuse large B-cell lymphoma. “The doctors tell me the therapy has extinguished the cancer cells, as far as they can tell,” the lawmaker shared during a virtual event with the Progressive Change Institute. Although Raskin continued to work while receiving treatment, reports CBS News, he said the treatment wasn’t easy. “It’s almost extinguished me in the process,” he added, “but I’m hanging in there and I’m going to make it through.”

In a tweet posted April 27, he wrote, “Tuesday I thanked nurses, doctors & pharmacists at [@MedStarGUH](#) who serve with splendid kindness—and saved my life over 5 months. I finished 6 rounds of 5-day chemo sessions—which they organized so I didn’t have to miss votes or hearings—and I rang the bell! A new chapter begins.”

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— Jamie Raskin (@jamie_raskin) [April 27, 2023](#)

PREVIOUS UPDATE, FEBRUARY 18: U.S. Representative Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) announced December 28 that he was diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, a “serious but curable form of cancer.” According to recent tweet from the lawmaker, his chemo experience just got a fashion makeover: Iconic guitarist Steven Van Zandt, a member of Bruce Springsteen’s E Street Band, gifted Raskin with a heads scarf, just like the ones the musician is famous for rocking.

[@StevieVanZandt](#)

— Jamie Raskin (@jamie_raskin) [February 11, 2023](#)

Raskin tweeted a photo of himself with his new fashion along with the message:

Look what I received from one of the greatest musicians on earth, a gift I will treasure almost as much as his song “I am a patriot.” You are about to see a step up in my chemo head-cover fashions for the next few months. Rock on Stevie, keep spreading the light.

Below is the original January 4 Cancer Health article about Raskin’s lymphoma diagnosis.

Representative Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) recently announced he has a “serious but curable form of cancer” and will begin outpatient treatment. The lawmaker, who was in the national spotlight last summer as a member of the House Select Committee investigating the January 6 attack on the Capitol, said in a [press release](#) that he plans to remain in office despite the diagnosis.

“After several days of tests, I have been diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma,” Raskin said in the press release. “I am about to embark on a course of chemo-immunotherapy on an outpatient basis at Med Star Georgetown University Hospital and Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.”

Raskin, 60, noted that while the “prognosis for most people in my situation is excellent after four months of treatment,” he has been advised by doctors to “reduce unnecessary exposure to avoid COVID-19, the flu and other viruses.”

Sharing my complete statement on my diagnosis.
Thanks for all the overwhelming support. I am very

optimistic about my treatment and am grateful for your encouragement, support and prayers.

<https://t.co/6S4KokunfL>

— Rep. Jamie Raskin (@RepRaskin) [December 29, 2022](#)

Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma “tends to grow quickly” and is most often treated with [chemotherapy](#) paired with a four-drug regimen administered in cycles three weeks apart, according to the [American Cancer Society](#).

Despite his diagnosis, Raskin remains hopeful about the future. When acknowledging the hair loss and weight gain that often results from chemotherapy, the congressman joked that he is “still holding out hope for the kind that causes hair gain and weight loss.”

This isn’t Raskin’s first bout with cancer. In 2010, he underwent radiation and chemo for Stage III colon cancer, and in 2021, [according to the Washington Post](#), he learned he had a benign cyst, which was discovered during an MRI.

Raskin has served as the U.S. representative for Maryland’s 8th congressional district since 2017.

“With the benefit of early detection and fine doctors, the help of my extraordinary staff, the love of Sarah and our daughters and sons-in-law (actual and to-be) and family and friends, and the support of my beloved constituents and my colleagues in the House,” he wrote, “I plan to get through this and, in the meantime, to keep making progress every day in Congress for American democracy.”

To learn more about diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, check out the video below by the [Lymphoma Research Foundation](#):

And for more information about lymphoma in general, visit the [Cancer Health Basics on Lymphoma](#), which reads in part:

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 (NHL), 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.

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.

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.