

Model: Give the gift of life

By [Katy Wheeler](#) 29 January 2008

A model who is battling cancer wants others to help stamp out the illness by giving the gift of life.

Toni Chorley's career came to a shuddering halt when she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, cancer of the lymphatic system, twice in 11 months.

The 22-year-old is to undergo a bone marrow transplant next month in a bid to halt the cancer. She is urging Wearsiders to help other sufferers by signing up to the donor register.

She said: "All I know is that the bone marrow has come from a British woman. I would love to say thank you to her. It is selfless people like her, who sign the register, that give others a chance of life."

Sunderland model Toni was diagnosed with cancer after experiencing flu-like symptoms.

The theatre studies graduate had just moved to London to pursue her showbusiness dreams.

But just eight weeks later, in November 2006, doctors told her that her lethargy and a recurring lump in her neck was Hodgkin's lymphoma.

She moved back home to County Durham to have chemotherapy sessions at Newcastle's RVI Hospital aimed at attacking the 6cm tumour on her chest.

She said: "The chemotherapy started in December. I needed a really aggressive form and my body didn't respond well to it. They tried another form, but again my body struggled. They called me the medical mystery."

In July last year she got the news she had been waiting for – she was in remission.

To celebrate, she signed up with Zebra Model Management, in St Thomas Street, Sunderland, so that she could step back in front of the camera.

She said: "I was trying to throw myself back into things and seize every opportunity."

But in a cruel – and relatively rare – twist Toni's cancer returned in September forcing her to embark on another three-month course of chemotherapy.

Doctors also decided to give her a bone marrow transplant to reduce the chances of the cancer returning from about 80 per cent to 30 per cent.



TONI CHORLEY: She wants more people to donate their bone marrow to save others.

Toni, who will have her transplant on February 13, said: "I don't think people realise how easy it is to become a donor. All you need to do is give your time to be tested.

"People think you have to have surgery, but you can do it through a needle under anaesthetic or through blood."

Toni added: "Getting cancer at 21 was a massive shock, but I don't feel sorry for myself, I see it as a blessing. It's helped me see things in a positive light and now I can hopefully help other people."

Anne Bell, director at Zeebra, said: "Toni found out the cancer had returned quite soon after signing up which was a real shame because she had to put a hold on her modelling.

"She's a real natural in front of the camera and has a look of Twiggy.

"When you hear about what she has been through I'm amazed that she has managed to remain so positive and upbeat."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

THE Anthony Nolan Trust saves lives thanks to more than 365,000 UK residents who have volunteered to donate bone marrow to any patient in need.

The charity maintains a database of tissue-typing results of all prospective donors. Whenever a patient requires a bone marrow transplant the trust is requested to search this database to identify potentially matched donors.

To join The Anthony Nolan Trust's register you need to be 18 to 40 years old in good health and fully committed to undergo the donation procedure if required.

In particular, The Anthony Nolan Trust specifically needs to recruit more young male donors and those of UK minority ethnic backgrounds.

For more details visit www.anthonynolan.org.uk or call 0901 88 222 34.