

Northern Ireland mum, 43, with one of the world's rarest cancers appeals for anyone who knows about it

Only around 150 cases of FATWO have ever been recorded. There is no proven treatment and no clinical trial. Nicola Crymble's family are asking the public to help them find answers.

A Northern Ireland mum of three and stepmum of two is living with a cancer so rare that only around 150 cases have ever been recorded worldwide, and her family are appealing for anyone, anywhere, who has come across it to get in touch.

Nicola Crymble, 43, a former classroom assistant, has a female adnexal tumour of probable Wolffian origin, known as FATWO. It grows from tiny leftover tissue from before birth, usually beside the womb. Most of the doctors who have treated her had never seen a case before.

Nicola had major surgery in February 2025, and the family hoped that would be the end of it. Most FATWOs never come back after surgery. Nicola's has. In September 2026 a scan confirmed the cancer had returned in two places: at the top of her pelvis and at the top of her liver, just under her diaphragm. Because both sit close to her heart and bowel, surgery and targeted radiotherapy have been ruled out.

On Tuesday 13 October, Nicola began chemotherapy, which she will have every three weeks, with a scan after three cycles. Her doctors have been honest that the aim is to control the cancer for as long as possible. Because FATWO is so rare, there is very little research to guide her care.

"There's no roadmap for this. Every decision about Nicola's care is being made with very little to go on. Somewhere out there is a woman who has had FATWO, a family who has been through it, or a doctor or researcher who has studied it. We want to find them. Any knowledge, however small, could help Nicola and the women who come after her."

Andrew Crymble, Nicola's husband

The family have begun sharing Nicola's journey openly online as Nicola's Story (@livingwithfatwo) to raise awareness and reach patients, families, doctors and researchers worldwide. They are also seeking specialist second opinions, to give Nicola every possible option, while being clear this is not a promise of a cure.

The family have launched Nicola's Journey: The £5 Challenge on GoFundMe, asking people to give £5, share the page, and nominate five friends to do the same. The fund will support Nicola's children, explore further treatment options and therapies, raise awareness of FATWO, help Nicola fulfil a few personal wishes, and support a local charity and the work in Kenya that she has given so much of herself to over the years.

The family had put life insurance in place for Nicola for exactly this situation, but because of a problem with the policy, that cover is no longer there for them. That is why they are turning to the public for help.

Anyone with knowledge of FATWO is asked to contact the family at nicola.crymble@gmail.com or through Facebook (Nicola's Story) and @livingwithfatwo on TikTok, YouTube and X. More at livingwithfatwo.com. The GoFundMe page is at gofund.me/e5cc123a5.

ENDS

Notes to editors: FATWO at a glance

- Full name: female adnexal tumour of probable Wolffian origin
- Cases ever recorded: around 150 worldwide (published counts range from under 140 to 165)
- First described: 1973. Only a handful of cases are reported each year
- How rare: a "rare cancer" in Europe affects fewer than 6 in 100,000 people a year; "ultra-rare" about 1 in 1,000,000. FATWO is far rarer than even ultra-rare
- Who it affects: women aged 13 to 83 have been reported; typical age around 50
- Recurrence: fewer than 1 in 5 come back after surgery, most often in the lining of the abdomen and the liver
- Treatment: surgery is the main treatment. The role of chemotherapy and radiotherapy is unknown. There are no clinical trials

Nicola's timeline

- Early 2025: tumour found beside her womb
- 14 Feb 2025: major surgery; diagnosed as FATWO
- 2025–26: regular scans and specialist reviews; Nicola gives up her job as a classroom assistant
- Sept 2026: scan confirms the cancer has returned; surgery and targeted radiotherapy ruled out
- 13 Oct 2026: chemotherapy begins, every three weeks, with a scan after three cycles

Photographs and contact

Photographs available on request. Please credit "Crymble family". Media enquiries: Andrew Crymble, 07545 972340, nicola.crymble@gmail.com · livingwithfatwo.com

Sources: systematic review of FATWO cases (2024), University of Brescia repository; International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Pathology (2025); PathologyOutlines.