

## Olivia Newton-John's Push for Better Breast Health

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October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and one celebrity who is committed to the cause and to early detection is [Olivia Newton-John](#). While Olivia is well known for her talents as an actress and a singer, she was also diagnosed with breast cancer in 1992 and is now cancer-free. This month, Olivia is a part of [1 a Minute](#), a docudrama that follows a woman's journey through breast cancer and hits theaters for one night only, October 6. After the film is over theaters will broadcast a live discussion about breast cancer, with Olivia among the panelists. We spoke with her recently about [Liv Aid](#) (a self-exam aid she's created to encourage women to be more active in their breast health), as well as the cancer and wellness center she's building, her new album, and her rockin' guest role on *Glee*.



**A breast self-exam led to your breast cancer diagnosis eighteen years ago. What do you want women to know about early detection, and why is it so important?**

Early detection is key. Lumps are benign in the majority of cases, but if it's a cancerous tumor, the earlier you find it and get it removed, the better the outcome. That's why women should do regular breast self-examinations. They should have yearly mammograms after age 40 and girls should start doing regular self-exams after age 20. That sounds really young but Dr. Ernie Bodai, who's our medical advisor on the Liv board, told us he's getting more and more young girls who have been turned away by their doctors saying, *it couldn't possibly be*, and by the time the tumor is found it's large.

**You also worked to develop a breast self-exam aid called Liv Aid. How exactly does it work?**

The Liv is a way of enhancing your touch when you do your regular breast self-examination. If you have any lumps in your breast, it makes them feel larger than they are so they're easier to detect. I found my breast lump myself, and the mammogram was negative, as was the needle biopsy. That's why I encourage girls to do it themselves.

**What do you think keeps women from doing their self-exams regularly?**

I think it's fear a lot of the time, and you forget. I think you can just put this next to your sink—it's in a pretty, pink box and will say Liv Geiger on it, and it's shaped like a heart so if you love yourself enough you'll exam regularly. It also comes in a purple color, which reflects healing.

**You just broke ground on the Olivia Newtown John Cancer & Wellness Center. Can you tell us about that?**

They started building it in Melbourne, Australia. It's going to be a wonderful cancer center with all the best and newest treatments, but also the wellness center, which is my baby, will be attached to it. So as you're going through your treatment, you'll be able to get support emotionally. The whole hospital will be about helping to heal the mind, body and spirit.



**You also just had a new album come out—you're having a busy year.**

Yes! It's called [Grace and Gratitude Renewed](#). It was an album that I had out a few years ago, but it never really reached people. Now I'm at a different stage in my life so we've renewed it and put a new song on there called "Help Me to Heal." The album is a healing piece of music made to make people feel good and relax.

**And now I have to ask, because I'm a huge fan of *Glee*—what was it like working on the show?**

When [show creator] Ryan Murphy met with me he said, *How do you feel about being yourself but being different?* It was really fun playing opposite myself. I'm not

a diva but it was fun to play one.