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North Texas Mother Raises Awareness for Rare Nasal Cancer Through Viral TikTok Advocacy

After a rare cancer diagnosis and nasal removal surgery, Tina Hodgdon uses social media to inform, educate, and build support networks online.

DALLAS FORT WORTH, TX, UNITED STATES, September 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A North Texas woman is making headlines and building a global community after using social media to spotlight the realities of surviving one of the rarest forms of cancer. Tina Hodgdon (formerly known as Tina Earls), a Texas mother of 3 (and 2 step children), underwent a full nasal removal following a delayed diagnosis of nasal cancer, and has since become a visible voice in patient education and awareness.

What began as a set of minor symptoms in 2012—nasal discharge, facial numbness, and persistent itching—became the start of a nearly two-year medical journey. Hodgdon was initially told she had a minor infection. Over time, however, her condition worsened. A lump appeared near her nose, and multiple antibiotic treatments failed to make a difference.

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>
> *Tina Hodgdon*

By May 2014, Tina received a definitive diagnosis: she had developed a rare form of cancer deep inside her nasal cavity. “The moment I heard the word ‘cancer,’ my mind just went blank,” she recalled. “It felt like a clock had started ticking, and all I could think about was my family.”

After undergoing partial surgeries and consultations, Tina learned that traditional treatment options such as radiotherapy would likely be ineffective in her case. The cancer had spread quickly, and there was a high risk it would return if not aggressively treated.

In November 2014, she underwent a full rhinectomy—the surgical removal of the entire nose. The decision, while difficult, was guided by the need to eliminate residual cancer cells and prevent recurrence.

“This wasn’t about appearance. It was about survival,” she later explained. “My choice was to live and be here for my children.”

The recovery process included not just physical adaptation, but an emotional reckoning with visibility and identity. As someone who had always taken pride in her appearance, Tina was unsure how the public would respond to a facial difference as significant as the absence of a nose.

In an era when many cancer survivors remain anonymous or unseen, Tina chose to be open. She turned to TikTok to share her experience, not to inspire or entertain, but to explain—to offer information that might help others recognize symptoms, manage uncertainty, or find community.

Her account, operating under the name @BipolarBetty, has since gained widespread attention. In each post, Tina addresses common questions with clarity and compassion: How do you breathe? Can you shower safely? What does it feel like in cold weather? Her answers are grounded in lived experience, providing insight into a medical condition rarely discussed in mainstream discourse.

What makes her content unique is its purpose. There’s no product, no service, no monetization pitch—just public health communication through a personal lens.

In 2023, her story was featured in Newsweek, drawing international attention to the issue of rare cancers and medical misdiagnosis. The article, titled “I Have No Nose—People Call Me Beautiful,” chronicled her treatment journey and emphasized the way strangers often respond to her with admiration, not pity.

She later clarified in social media posts that while she appreciates compliments, her goal isn’t to gain attention—it’s to normalize what others might find difficult to confront. “It’s not about being brave or bold,” she wrote. “It’s about being seen, so others in similar situations know they’re not alone.”

Her openness has also made her a resource. Hodgdon frequently receives messages from others facing head and neck cancers, facial reconstruction, or anxiety about visible differences. In response, she has plans to develop a dedicated educational website, bipolarbetty.om, which will include FAQs, blog posts, and practical resources.

Public health researchers say that stories like Tina’s highlight important trends. As healthcare systems face increasing pressure, and as online health misinformation spreads, survivor-led storytelling can serve as a counterbalance. When conducted responsibly, as Hodgdon’s is, it has the potential to support early detection, reduce stigma, and guide patients toward effective medical care.

“This case brings together three things,” says an oncology advisor familiar with similar cases. “One: a rare disease with limited research. Two: a delayed diagnosis, which is unfortunately common. And three: an individual willing to publicly share what most people wouldn’t. That creates awareness that institutions alone often can’t.”

Tina's social media presence also reveals gaps in the healthcare system—especially regarding initial evaluations of uncommon symptoms. Her journey included being misdiagnosed multiple times, which is not unusual for patients with rare illnesses. In one of her TikToks, she notes that had she waited much longer, the cancer could have spread to her brain or other organs.

Beyond the personal and medical dimensions of the story lies a cultural conversation about appearance, health, and how society responds to visible change. Tina describes being approached in public—sometimes by curious onlookers, sometimes by people offering kindness.

“People will stop me and say, ‘I’m not trying to offend you, but I just want to say you’re beautiful,’” she explains. “What they really mean is that they see someone who’s still smiling, still living.”

She also educates her viewers on the practical aspects of life post-rhinectomy. For instance, she explains how breathing through an open cavity presents unique challenges—especially in dry or cold environments—and how she uses gauze or humidification to protect her airway. She discusses how water management while bathing is critical to avoid complications like “dry drowning,” which can occur if fluid enters the lungs indirectly.

Her perspective reframes visibility not as a vulnerability, but as a tool. “When people stare, I try to smile back. Because now they’ve seen something they’ll never forget—and maybe that’ll make them more empathetic next time.”

Today, Tina continues to update her TikTok with videos that range from light-hearted to deeply informative. She discusses makeup adaptations, filter use, and the emotional aspects of her recovery. She avoids presenting herself as a motivational figure—instead, she positions herself as a woman who faced a rare circumstance and wants to prevent others from feeling unprepared or isolated.

She plans to release additional resources once her site is launched and hopes to partner with nonprofit organizations that focus on rare cancers, reconstructive surgery support, and patient rights. A registered trademark for her platform name, BipolarBetty, is also in process, although she has opted to focus public messaging on education rather than branding for now.

For Tina, the message is simple: survival is valuable, even when it doesn’t look like what people expect. And awareness is most powerful when it leads to better outcomes, not just admiration.

“I didn’t set out to be an advocate,” she says. “But I knew that silence wouldn’t help anyone—not me, and not the people who might be going through the same thing.”

Her story continues to evolve, but one thing remains clear: by combining lived experience with accessible communication, Tina is shifting the conversation around rare disease visibility—and reminding audiences that health, identity, and beauty are far more complex than what’s seen on the surface.

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