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# See What This Brave Mom Did to Mark Her Last Day of Breastfeeding

Natasha Fogarty stopped nursing in order to battle stage 2 breast cancer.



by MARESSA BROWN [←](#) JUL 5, 2016



KARI DALLAS/VINTAGE LENS PHOTOGRAPHY



Choosing to breastfeed is a completely personal thing that some moms do for a month, a year, or several years, depending on her supply and a gazillion other factors. A 29-year-old mom named Natasha Fogarty from St. Louis, Missouri, recently marked her last day of breastfeeding her 5-month-old son Milo. Although her original plan was to breastfeed for seven more months, Fogarty

was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer.

Fogarty shared her story on the popular Facebook page [Breastfeeding Mama Talk](#), writing, "My breastfeeding story stopped just Sunday. There are heavy tears in my eyes. ... I had to have a single mastectomy. I wanted and planned to breastfeed for a year. Unfortunately to save my life I had to stop."

Fogarty actually recalled finding the lump on her right side while she was pregnant. "I actually felt a lump on the right side [when] I was like a month from delivering [Milo], and I just thought it was my milk coming in," she tells [Cosmopolitan.com](#). "My boobs were getting lumpy and different, and I was like, 'Oh, I'm not going to worry about it.' I had him, and then my boobs got really engorged, [and] I forgot about it, and I started being a mom and raising my son. But every time I would breastfeed him, that particular bump would never go away. I'd push it around, thinking it was a clog, and it didn't [budge]."

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That's when she decided to go see her obstetrician who advised she have an ultrasound. That screening lead to a mammogram, which lead to a biopsy, and on a Friday, while she was at

work, Fogarty received a phone call about her results. "They were like, 'You know, I hate to tell you this over the phone...'" she says. "It was shock and disbelief, and she starts saying all these other things, I felt like I didn't even hear her, I couldn't believe that was what it was."

Although Fogarty was initially devastated and says she "cried a lot" with her husband after hearing the diagnosis, she felt very supported by her whole medical team. They moved quickly to schedule a single mastectomy, and Fogarty also saw a fertility specialist to discuss trying for another baby in five years, once she's

completed treatment.

Through the flurry of appointments, Fogarty was also grappling with the reality of having to stop breastfeeding Milo. "I loved breastfeeding more than anything in the world," she says. "It was my favorite thing to do. I still get choked up about it — the fact that I had to stop was extremely hard. [Before my mastectomy, I thought,] I'm just going to cherish every single moment and just breastfeed. ... Even during the hardest moments, it was just so special to just grab him and know that he could be comforted by me, and he just looked into my eyes, and there was such a connection of love. I wanted to go for a year, I never wanted to stop, so coming to terms with [stopping] was really hard."

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To mark the last time she'd nurse her son, Fogarty scheduled a photo shoot with Kari Dallas of [Vintage Lens Photography](#) in St. Louis, Missouri. "My sister was over and we were just hanging out, and I said, 'Do you mind if I take a shower?'" Fogarty explains. In the shower, she had the idea to document her last breastfeeding session with Milo with professional photos. Fogarty recalls that Dallas responded to her call-out on Facebook "immediately" and also volunteered to do the shoot for free. "It was so amazing," she says. "That is what I wanted — not only be able to remember breastfeeding, but the last day I was breastfeeding my son."

The shoot was made even more ~brilliant~ by Fogarty's recent hair makeover. "Pink has always been my favorite color," she says. "The moment that I found out that I had breast cancer, and I knew I'd lose my hair because of chemo, I said, 'I'm going to do it!' All my friends and family were like, 'Of course you dyed your hair — we didn't expect anything less.' And I love it!"

Fogarty says she wanted to share her gorgeous photos and story with Breastfeeding Mama Talk, because she had been an avid follower of the page since she gave birth to Milo. "I [also] wanted women to just be aware," she says. "I'm so young, and [breast cancer] happened. I wanted women who are going through what I'm going through to reach out if they need some support."

She also hopes her experience can serve as a source of comfort and inspiration for other mothers who either have to stop breastfeeding before they wanted to or who are finding it challenging. "To hear a story like mine could inspire you to take a deep breath and say, 'I'm very lucky, and I get to do this as long as I want,'" Fogarty says. "[It could] inspire them and push them whenever they're having a bad moment. I am completely humbled by this whole experience, and I hope I can give hope to other women."

As she looks toward 24 weeks of chemo treatment, Fogarty feels blessed to have the help of three close friends who are donating breast milk for Milo. "Milo would not eat formula," she explains. "The stress was huge." But when her friends offered to help out, Fogarty cried says she cried with them in "absolute joy." As a result, Fogarty is better able to focus on her battle ahead. "I'm just trying to stay strong and push through it," she says.

Here are some of the gorgeous shots Dallas captured of Natasha Fogarty, baby Milo, and Natasha's husband James.





KARI DALLAS/VINTAGE LENS PHOTOGRAPHY



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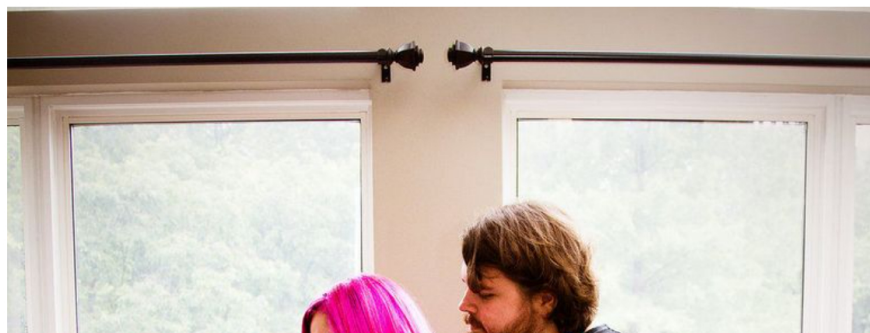
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