



# DR CATHERINE POINTER



RESEARCH FELLOW OF  
EXPERIMENTAL CANCER  
MEDICINE

CANCER RESEARCH TRIALS

"I love that I am improving cancer treatments to help more people than ever. I work on the front line of turning ideas into reality."

## Academic profile

### Degree

BSc Biomedical Science

### Post grad

MRes Cancer Sciences, PhD  
Cancer Sciences

### Qualification/achievement you are most proud of

PhD Cancer Sciences

### Subjects you enjoyed at school

Textiles, Drama and Science

## Career Summary

As a child, the idea of being a scientist seemed exciting but because it wasn't my best subject at school, I assumed I couldn't do it. At the start of year 10 I was diagnosed with blood cancer. In hospital I had lots of questions about my treatment.

My doctors would answer my questions as best they could, but there would always come a point where the answer would be "no one knows, that's what research is trying to find out".

I remember thinking perhaps I could be the one who works it out one day. Even though I missed year 10 and a year of A levels after the cancer relapsed, I really felt my experiences made me more qualified to become a scientist! Once I recovered, I worked hard and didn't let anything stop me

## What inspired you?

I always wanted to know how the human body worked. It's the one thing we all have in common! I wanted to know the real, detailed answers and I liked the idea of working in a lab and doing experiments too. When I was 14 I thought because science wasn't my best subject, and I wasn't a straight A\* genius, that I wasn't good enough to be a scientist. But when I was ill myself, I saw how real-life science worked. I also saw where things needed improving! I realised doctors and scientists were normal people who had just worked hard for a common cause and it really inspired me to have a career where I could get my answers and change medicine for the better.

## Describe your job



## Did you know .....

... the 'white blood cells' of your immune system aren't just one type of cell? There's a whole hierarchy of types and sub-types of white blood cells, each with an essential role. Together they make an expert team that keep you safe.

## Top tip

Just because you're having a tough year, doesn't mean you should let it ruin the next 60. Learn from the hard moments and use them as reason to fight for better.

## Best thing about my job

Continually learning how the human immune system works and using it to make medicine better!

## Find out more

- [Southampton ECMC](#)
- [Cancer Research UK](#)
- [Southampton CRUK twitter feed](#)

## Watch the video:

