A practical guide to living with and after cancer

MANAGING WEIGHT GAIN AFTER CANCER TREATMENT
About this booklet

This booklet aims to give you ideas to help keep to a healthy body weight after cancer treatment. We explain how changing the types of food you eat and being more physically active can help you lose weight and feel healthier.

This booklet doesn't cover eating difficulties caused by cancer and its treatments, or advice if you’ve lost weight. Our booklets Eating problems and cancer and The building-up diet have more information on these topics.

In this booklet, we’ve included comments from people who’ve changed their diet or lifestyle after cancer. Some are from people who’ve chosen to share their story with us. To share your story, visit macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices

We hope the information in this booklet answers any questions you may have. If you have any more questions, you can ask your doctor, nurse or dietitian.

If you’d like to discuss this information, call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00, Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. If you’re hard of hearing, you can use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay. For non-English speakers, interpreters are available. Alternatively, visit macmillan.org.uk

For further information and support, there are some useful addresses and websites on pages 43–48.

If you find this booklet helpful, you could pass it on to your family and friends. They may also want information to help them support you.
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The benefits of being a healthy weight

After cancer treatment, many people want to make positive changes to their lives. Taking steps to lead a healthy lifestyle is often a major part of these changes.

Keeping to a healthy weight and being more physically active will help you feel stronger, give you more energy and boost your self-esteem. Being a healthy weight reduces the risk of conditions such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. It may also reduce your risk of developing some cancers and reduce the risk of certain cancers coming back. Your cancer doctor or nurse can tell you more about this.

Choosing to eat healthily is one of the best decisions you can make for your overall health. You get even more benefits if you combine it with being more physically active. Making positive lifestyle choices can also give you back a sense of control by helping you focus on what you can do for yourself.

There’s lots of information about eating well during and after cancer treatment, including several videos, at macmillan.org.uk/eatingwell
Weight gain and cancer

Many people had a healthy lifestyle before their cancer diagnosis and treatment. But sometimes it can be a challenge to maintain this. People don’t usually expect to gain weight during cancer treatment.

But some treatments, side effects or even lifestyle changes can cause you to put on weight:

- **Treatments** – some chemotherapy drugs, steroids and hormonal therapies can cause weight gain.

- **Tiredness due to the cancer or treatment** – this can make you less physically active than usual, which may cause you to gain weight.

- **Depression** – for some people, natural feelings of sadness or worry about the cancer can develop into depression. Eating more and gaining weight may be symptoms of this.

- **Stopping smoking** – this is the healthiest decision anyone who smokes can make. But it can cause weight gain at first. You’ll be much healthier after quitting though, and you can gradually lose the extra weight.

- **Comfort eating** – some people turn to food for comfort when life is stressful, which can lead to weight gain.

- **People close to us** may offer food as a way of showing that they care and want to be helpful. And it can be difficult to refuse such a kind offer.
Don’t be too hard on yourself if you find you’ve put on weight. Sometimes, knowing why it’s happened can help you think of ways to manage it.

After treatment, most people need time to recover. But as you gradually get better, you may find that you’re ready to make some changes.

If you think you’ve gained weight because you’re depressed, talk to your GP or nurse. There are effective treatments for depression, such as counselling and antidepressants.

If you’re having hormonal therapy as part of your treatment, it’s very important not to stop taking this, even if you think it’s causing weight gain. Talk to your cancer doctor or nurse if you’re concerned about this. Eating healthily and being more physically active will help you manage your weight.

**Talk to your doctor and nurse**

Before trying to lose weight, it’s important to speak to your GP, cancer doctor or nurse. They can talk to you about the right approach for you, based on the cancer you have and its treatment.

They’ll also take into account your weight before diagnosis and any other medical conditions you may have.

Your doctor or nurse will measure your body mass index (BMI, see pages 9–10) and blood pressure, and may take a blood test.

They might also suggest you see other health professionals for advice, such as a dietitian, physiotherapist or specialist nurse. They can also give you information about where you can get help and support locally.
What is a healthy weight for me?

Body mass index (BMI)

BMI is a way of measuring whether you’re a healthy weight for your height. You can use a BMI calculator such as the one available on the World Cancer Research Fund website at wcrf-uk.org/cancer_prevention/health_tools/bmi_calculator.php. Or your GP or practice nurse can work out your BMI for you.

Your BMI score will show which weight category you are in:

- A BMI of 18.4 or lower is underweight.
- A BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is a healthy weight.
- A BMI between 25 and 29.9 is overweight.
- A BMI of 30 or higher is obese (well above the healthy weight range for your height).
- A BMI of 40 or higher is very obese.

BMI results are interpreted differently in older people and people of South Asian origin. So talk to your doctor or nurse before you set a target for losing weight.

You can use the chart on the next page to check your BMI. Find the line that matches your weight and follow it until it crosses the line that matches your height. Speak to your GP or nurse if you are above or below the ‘healthy’ range.
Managing weight gain after cancer treatment

BMI chart

Source: Department of Health
Waist measurement

Your waist measurement is another good guide to your weight. People who have a lot of fat around their waist have a higher risk of health problems. Measure your waist by placing a tape measure halfway between your lowest rib and the top of your hip bone. A healthy waist measurement is:

- **for women** less than 80cm (31 1/2 in)
- **for men** less than 94cm (37 in)
- **for men of South Asian origin** less than 90cm (35 in).
Weight loss

Setting a target for weight loss

It’s important to be realistic about how much weight you want to lose and over how much time. If you lose weight gradually, you’re more likely to reach and stay at a healthy weight.

Most people put on weight over several months or longer, so the time to reach your target weight should be roughly the same.

To monitor your weight loss, weigh yourself weekly at the same time of day and using the same scales. If you find it difficult to get to your target, or if you reach it very easily, talk to your doctor, nurse or dietitian about setting a new one.

Energy (calories)

Food and drink contain energy. This is measured in units called kilocalories, or more often abbreviated to calories or Kcals.

Recommended daily amount of energy intake for adults:

- Men: 2,500 calories
- Women: 2,000 calories
We need fewer calories as we get older. If you’re worried about the amount of calories you are eating ask your doctor for advice.

Two thirds of the energy we should take in is used for bodily functions such as controlling our body temperature, digesting food and making new tissues. The rest of the energy should be used up during physical activity. When we take in more energy than we use up, this is stored as fat and we gain weight.

To lose weight, you need to burn off more energy than you take in.

You can do this by:

- reducing the amount of calories you take in through food and drink
- increasing the amount of energy you burn off through physical activity.

Many weight loss programmes include calorie-controlled diets. This booklet looks at eating different food types in healthy amounts to help reduce the amount of energy you take in.

This can help you lose weight, especially if you also increase the amount of physical activity you do.
Know your food types

Few of us have time to check the energy (calorie) content of everything we eat. But knowing about the different types of food can help you control what you eat and help you lose weight.

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. They are also likely to be low in fat. Aim to eat at least five portions a day. The following each count as one portion:

- one apple or banana
- a slice of melon
- two small fruits such as kiwi fruits or plums
- a handful of berries
- a small can of tinned pineapple or half a fresh pineapple
- a glass of orange juice (this only counts once a day)
- one whole vegetable, such as an onion or a small pepper
- three heaped tablespoons of diced carrots or shredded cabbage
- a bowl of mixed salad (cereal bowl-sized)
- seven cherry tomatoes
- two broccoli florets
- three heaped tablespoons of peas or lentils.
To increase your daily intake of fruit and vegetables, try the following:

• Have a mixed salad as a starter, or as a side dish with your main meal.

• Reduce meat portions and enjoy larger servings of vegetables and salad.

• If you need a snack between meals, choose fresh fruit.

Try to avoid adding butter, rich sauces or dressings to your vegetables and salads, as this will increase the energy you take in. Frozen vegetables and tinned fruit in juice (not syrup) are just as healthy as fresh ones and can be cheaper.

Top tip: Try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Starchy foods

Starch is a type of carbohydrate, which is a good source of energy. Foods such as bread, breakfast cereal, rice and pasta are starchy foods. Wholegrain or wholemeal starchy foods are better if you’re trying to lose weight, as they make you feel fuller.

Starchy food should make up about one third of what you eat in a day.

Potatoes are also included in this food type. Boiled or baked potatoes are healthier than deep-fried chips. If you want to eat chips, use the low-fat, oven varieties.

Top tip: When eating starchy foods, choose wholegrain or wholemeal.
Fibre

The main role of fibre is to keep the digestive system healthy. It is the part of cereals, fruit and vegetables that are not digested and can pass down into the gut.

Starchy food can be a good source of fibre, and increasing the amount of fibre in your diet can help you feel fuller more quickly. Try changing to wholemeal bread and high-fibre breakfast cereals. Peas, beans, lentils, grains and seeds are other good sources of fibre, as well as fruit and vegetables.

Fish

Fish is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals. It’s often low in saturated fat. Aim to have at least two portions of fish a week. Grilling, steaming, poaching and baking fish is healthier than frying it. Tinned fish such as tuna, sardines and pilchards are also low in saturated fat. Frozen fish can be cheaper than fresh, but avoid high-fat, processed meals with fish in them, or fish in batter.

Top tip: Try to eat at least two portions of fish a week.
Meat

Although meat is high in protein and minerals, it can also be high in fat. Try to reduce your meat portions and have more vegetables instead.

Choose cuts of meat that have less fat, such as those labelled ‘lean’ or ‘extra lean’. You can also look at the labels to see which cuts have the least fat. Or ask a butcher or grocer if you’re not sure.

Skinned turkey or chicken is a lower-fat alternative to red meat such as lamb, beef or pork. Grill or roast your meat rather than frying it to reduce the amount of calories you eat.

Try cutting down on processed meats, such as sausages, burgers, pies and sausage rolls, which are high in saturated fat.

Top tip: Cut down on meat generally, especially red and processed meat, and choose leaner cuts.

Milk and dairy foods

Milk and dairy products are good sources of protein, vitamins and calcium, but they can also be high in fat. Try semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, low-fat yoghurt and have only small amounts of cheese.
Sugar

Sugar is a good source of energy and occurs naturally in things such as fruit and milk. The body also gets sugar for energy by breaking down carbohydrates.

Processed sugar is not recommended. This is found in sweets, biscuits, cakes, pastries and puddings. It’s also added to tea or coffee.

Fizzy drinks and alcohol often contain a lot of sugar too. Try to avoid added sugar in your food and drinks. It is better to get energy from slow-release carbohydrates, nuts, whole fruits (not just juice) and wholemeal breads.

If you find it hard to reduce your sugar intake, then a sugar substitute might help in the short term. But this won’t reduce your longing for sugar so it is not a long-term solution.

Fats

Fats also give us energy, but they are a concentrated source of energy and high in calories. There are two types of fat in food:

- **Saturated fats** – found mainly in fatty cuts of meat, sausages, pies, butter, ghee, cheese, cakes and biscuits.
- **Unsaturated fats** – found mainly in vegetable-based cooking oils and spreads, nuts, seeds and oily fish such as sardines or mackerel.

Too much fat in your diet can be unhealthy and lead to weight gain and other health problems. Try to cut down on foods that contain fat, particularly saturated fat. For example, only use cream or butter in small amounts.
If you have a choice, pick foods with unsaturated fat, but remember these are still high-energy (high-calorie) foods. Even foods labelled as ‘low fat’ can still be high in calories.

Salt

Too much salt in your diet can lead to high blood pressure, which can cause heart disease and stroke. Try to eat less than 6g of salt a day (that’s about a teaspoonful).

It’s not just the salt you add to your food from the salt shaker that counts. Many cured or processed meats (such as sausages, cured ham or bacon), tinned foods and ready meals contain high levels of salt, so always check the label.

‘I eat lots of fruit and vegetables and aim to have five a day. I always eat wholemeal bread and eat other food in moderation, rather than give it up.’

Robin
Food labels

Most packaged foods have labels giving information to help you make healthier choices at the supermarket. They give information about the levels of fat, salt, added sugar, calories, and sometimes sodium and fibre.

Many food manufacturers and supermarkets use a food traffic light system on their labels. The label tells you the amount of fats, saturated fats, sugars and salt per 100g (3½oz) of the product.

The colours show if the amounts are high, medium or low:
- Red – content level is high.
- Amber – content level is medium.
- Green – content level is low.

You should eat more foods with amber and green labels and fewer with red. You can use the table below to check products that don’t have traffic light labelling, by comparing it with their ingredients list.
Healthy eating

Healthy eating tips

As well as making healthy choices when choosing or cooking your food, these tips will help you cut down how much you eat.

Change your habits

• Start the day with a healthy breakfast – this will help you cut out morning snacks and feel less hungry at lunchtime.

• Eat at the table rather than in front of the TV. Concentrating on your food helps you enjoy it more and makes you feel more full. This makes it easier to avoid snacking between meals.

• Make sure you drink plenty of fluids. Sometimes we mistake being thirsty for being hungry. Have a glass of water before meals.

• Tell your family and friends what you’re doing so they can support you.

Cut down portion size

The amount you eat is just as important as what you eat. If you eat large portions, you’re more likely to gain weight. There are things you can do to help cut down your food portions:

• Use a smaller dinner plate – bigger plates need more food to fill them.

• Enjoy a healthy starter, such as low-fat soup, melon or salad, before your main meal.

• Eat slowly and avoid second helpings. It takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you’re full, so rest for a while before deciding whether you want more.
• It’s important not to miss out on main meals.

• Avoid snacking straight from a bag or packet. Put the amount of food you want to eat on a plate.

**Fast foods and eating out**

Fast food is usually high in energy and fat. If you eat a lot of fast food, it’s important to cut down.

Last-minute eating decisions can result in buying fast food and take-away food, so try to plan your healthy meals and snacks in advance. You can do this using the pull-out planner from page 36.

Even when you’ve changed to a healthier way of eating, there may be times you want to be more relaxed about it. You can still enjoy the occasional treat or a meal out with family or friends.

If you’re having take-away food or eating out, you could:

• look for the healthier options on the menu

• ask about the ingredients in meals

• ask for a smaller portion size

• order a starter as a main course

• share a main course with someone

• order fruit salad for dessert.

Our booklet *Healthy eating and cancer* contains more information and advice. There’s also a video of a dietitian explaining how best way to lose weight and offering tips for healthy eating at [macmillan.org.uk/dietandlifestyle](http://macmillan.org.uk/dietandlifestyle)
Healthy menu ideas

In this section there are some ideas for healthy meals and snacks. There’s one for every day of the week.

You can use the pull-out planner at the back of this booklet (page 36) to plan your meals.

**Breakfast**
- Wholegrain cereal with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.
- Sliced fresh fruit or berries with low-fat yoghurt.
- Boiled, poached or scrambled eggs with wholemeal toast.
- A bagel with mashed banana.
- A homemade smoothie, made by adding blended fruit to some fresh fruit juice and low-fat yoghurt.
- Porridge with dried fruit and semi-skimmed milk.
- A Sunday ‘grill-up’ instead of a fry-up.

**Lunch**
- Homemade vegetable soup with a wholemeal bread roll.
- Baked beans on toast.
- A baked potato with tinned tuna (in spring water), served with sweetcorn or low-fat coleslaw.
- Wholemeal pitta bread with salad and cold, lean meat.
- Pilchards, sardines or mackerel on toast.
- A wholemeal bread sandwich with tuna, egg or cold meat, served with salad.
- Leftovers from a healthy dinner.
**Dinner**

- Thai vegetable curry and brown rice.
- Wholegrain pasta with a low-fat sauce, vegetables and a side salad.
- Salmon steak with lemon juice, served with boiled or baked potatoes and vegetables.
- Chicken, sweetcorn and noodle soup.
- Wholegrain pasta with tuna and a side salad.
- Turkey chow mein, mushrooms, red pepper, pak choi, carrot and Chinese egg noodles.
- Lean beef casserole with potatoes and vegetables.

**Snacks**

- Fresh fruit.
- Seeds, mixed nuts and berries (it’s cheaper to buy them in bulk, from a health food shop).
- Oatcakes with cherry tomatoes.
- Fresh carrots or celery sticks dipped into a low-fat dip such as hummus or salsa.
- A handful of raisins or other dried fruit.
- Homemade plain popcorn.
- A low-fat fruit yoghurt.

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Our booklet *Recipes for people affected by cancer* has other useful meal ideas.
The World Cancer Research Fund website also has healthy recipes from all over the world, visit **wcrf-uk.org/uk/hered-help/recipes**

Eating a healthy, balanced diet does not mean that you have to buy expensive foods. Although it is not specifically for people with cancer, the NHS Choices video Eating well on a budget has useful tips on how to eat well for less.

Watch it at **nhs.uk/video/pages/eatingwellonabudget.apsx**

‘I gained a lot of weight during my treatment. My nutritionist advised me to eat healthy snacks every four hours with three main meals – the biggest meal being lunch with something much lighter for dinner.’

*Polina*
Alcohol is high in calories and can lead to weight gain. It’s also linked with an increased risk of some cancers. Sticking to sensible drinking guidelines is good for your health and your weight.

Government guidelines now recommend that it is best if both men and women do not drink any more than 14 units of alcohol per week. If you do drink as much as 14 units, it is best to spread this evenly over three days or more. If you want to cut down on the amount you are drinking, a good way is to have several drink-free days.

**Number of calories and units of alcohol per drink**

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<tr>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Units of alcohol</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pint of lager</td>
<td>170–250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard glass of white wine (175ml)</td>
<td>130–160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single vodka (25ml with a mixer)</td>
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To help you cut down on calories when drinking alcohol, you could:

• have a shandy using a low-calorie lemonade

• add low-calorie or calorie-free mixers to spirits or white wine in a tall glass

• alternate alcoholic drinks with low-calorie, non-alcoholic ones

• have a glass of water alongside an alcoholic drink.
Getting physically active

Increasing your physical activity is another positive change you can make to your lifestyle. Exercise helps you burn off energy from food and lose weight, as well as making you feel healthier. Even if you don’t lose weight, being more active can help you recover from treatment side effects and reduce the risk of cancer coming back.

You might be a bit nervous about this if you haven’t been active for a while. If you’re not used to exercise, get advice before you start. Your GP or cancer specialist can talk to you about the type and amount of exercise that’s safe for you to do.

Physical activity varies from day-to-day activities such as walking or gardening to the exercise programmes you might find in a gym. Any increase in physical activity will help you burn more energy.

If you have problems with walking or balance, ask your doctor about a referral to a physiotherapist. They can assess you and show you how to exercise safely. Some doctors may be able to refer you to an exercise scheme run by fitness trainers.
Getting started

Your fitness level may have reduced over many months, so it’s important to take time to build it back up. Try to be physically active for 30 minutes, five times each week. This could be made up of three 10-minute periods of activity each day.

If you start gently, you can try to do a little more each week. For example, you could walk a bit further or a bit faster each time. You’ll gradually find you can do more.

You can use the fold-out planner at the back of this booklet to record and plan your activities (page 36).

Don’t push yourself too hard. At the end of an activity, you should feel warm and slightly out of breath, but not exhausted. With practice, you’ll soon find you’re able to do more.

Here are some tips for getting started:

• Walking is good exercise. Start off with short walks at a comfortable pace, then gradually build up the speed and distance. Walking to the shops, taking children to the park and walking the dog all count.

• Take stairs instead of lifts. Climbing stairs uses up twice the energy that walking on flat surfaces does.

• Housework can be a form of exercise. Listening to fast-paced music while you clean and tidy can help you do it faster and burn more energy.

• Gardening is a good way to get active and enjoy the fresh air. If you don’t have a garden, you could volunteer to help out at a community garden. Your local volunteer centre can provide details – find yours in the phone book or on do-it.org.uk

• Bowling and dancing can be ways to get fitter while socialising.
Getting stronger

As you get fitter, you’ll be able to increase the amount of physical activity you do. Start with exercise that you enjoy. When you get stronger, you may want to increase your target to 45–60 minutes a day, a few days a week.

Being part of a group can make exercise more enjoyable.

Here are some ideas for when you feel able to do more:

• Swimming is good all-round exercise and it doesn’t put much strain on your joints. Aqua aerobics classes can be a good way to get fit in the pool.

• Joining an exercise class or club can be a good way to get more active and socialise. You could try aerobics, yoga, pilates or tai chi. Beginners’ classes are usually available. Joining a club or gym doesn’t always have to be expensive – look at some in your area to find prices.

• Try cycling outdoors or indoors on an exercise bike. There is a National Cycle Network. It offers safe cycling routes throughout the UK that minimise encounters with busy roads. Visit sustrans.org.uk for details.

• Join a walking group, or build up the distances that you walk. There are free, guided health walks across the UK. See page 44 for contact details.
Get fit for free

There are many ways to get fit for free. For example, you could contact your local authority about any schemes that may be going on in your area.

Some areas may offer free swimming classes on certain days of the week to encourage people to exercise. Other areas have free outdoor gym equipment in parks so people can exercise in the fresh air. If you are under 16, over 60, or if you are on benefits, you may be entitled to free leisure services.

We can send you our Move more pack if you’d like more information about exercise. This includes our booklet Physical activity and cancer treatment and our Get active, feel good DVD. We also have information about physical activity during and after cancer treatment, including several videos, at macmillan.org.uk/physicalactivity

The NHS website Change4Life provides smart tools that include how to move more, eat well and be healthier. Visit nhs.uk/change4life/pages/change-for-life.aspx Some of the smart tools apps can also be downloaded for free using your mobile phone.
Who can help?

Family and friends

Tell your family and friends what you’re doing and ask them to support you. They might even join you in your exercising, which can encourage you and is good for them too.

Medical team

Your doctor or nurse can advise you on a healthy weight or put you in touch with a dietitian. If you find that you’re struggling, your GP may refer you to an NHS weight loss clinic.

Exercise groups

You can find more information on local exercise groups at your local library, healthy living centre, community centre or leisure centre. You can also look online or in the phone book.

Weight loss groups

These can be a good way to meet other people who can encourage and support you. Weight loss programmes should be based on a balanced, healthy diet, with regular physical activity and weight loss of no more than 0.5–1kg (1–2lb) a week.
Using a food and activity planner

Writing down your meals and exercise each week can help you plan meals and exercise in advance and keep track of how you’re doing.

We’ve included a pull-out planner that you can use to help you manage your weight.

Tips for using the planner

• Photocopy the planner before you fill it in, so you can use a new one each week.
• Keep a note of everything you eat for a week if you can.
• You can then see what you’ve done well and use it to plan for the next week. You’ll also have a record to show your doctor or dietitian.
• Use the suggestions on pages 25–26 to plan some healthy meals into your week.
• Tick off each portion of fruit and vegetables you eat.
• Use the activity section to plan and record physical activities.
• At times when you’ve eaten a lot, make a note of where you were, who you were with and how you were feeling. This may help you spot any eating habits that are causing weight gain.

When you’re getting used to life after cancer treatment, being able to talk to people going through the same thing can help. Visit community.macmillan.org.uk to chat to others and share your experiences.
# Food and Activity Planner

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<td>Snacks and drinks</td>
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<td>Did I do any exercise?</td>
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What went well this week? | Thoughts for next week
About our information

We provide expert, up-to-date information about cancer. And all our information is free for everyone.

Order what you need

You may want to order more leaflets or booklets like this one. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on 0808 808 00 00.

We have booklets on different cancer types, treatments and side effects. We also have information about work, financial issues, diet, life after cancer and information for carers, family and friends.

All of our information is also available online at macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformation. There you’ll also find videos featuring real-life stories from people affected by cancer, and information from health and social care professionals.

Other formats

We also provide information in different languages and formats, including:

- audiobooks
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- Easy Read booklets
- ebooks
- large print
- translations.

Find out more at macmillan.org.uk/otherformats. If you’d like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk or call us on 0808 808 00 00.
Help us improve our information

We know that the people who use our information are the real experts. That’s why we always involve them in our work. If you’ve been affected by cancer, you can help us improve our information.

We give you the chance to comment on a variety of information including booklets, leaflets and fact sheets.

If you’d like to hear more about becoming a reviewer, email reviewing@macmillan.org.uk You can get involved from home whenever you like, and we don’t ask for any special skills – just an interest in our cancer information.
Managing weight gain after cancer treatment

Other ways we can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we’re here to support you. No one should face cancer alone.

Talk to us

If you or someone you know is affected by cancer, talking about how you feel and sharing your concerns can really help.

**Macmillan Support Line**

Our free, confidential phone line is open Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. Our cancer support specialists can:

- help with any medical questions you have about your cancer or treatment
- help you access benefits and give you financial advice
- be there to listen if you need someone to talk to
- tell you about services that can help you in your area.

Call us on **0808 808 00 00** or email us via our website, macmillan.org.uk/talktous

**Information centres**

Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. There, you can speak with someone face to face. Visit one to get the information you need, or if you’d like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone alone and in confidence.

Find your nearest centre at macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.
Talk to others

No one knows more about the impact cancer can have on your life than those who have been through it themselves. That’s why we help to bring people together in their communities and online.

Support groups
Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, we can help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face to face with people who understand. Find out about support groups in your area by calling us or by visiting macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport

Online community
Thousands of people use our online community to make friends, blog about their experiences and join groups to meet other people going through the same things. You can access it any time of day or night. Share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people’s posts at macmillan.org.uk/community

The Macmillan healthcare team
Our nurses, doctors and other health and social care professionals give expert care and support to individuals and their families. Call us or ask your GP, consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals near you.

‘Everyone is so supportive on the online community, they know exactly what you’re going through. It can be fun too. It’s not all just chats about cancer.’

Mal
Help with money worries

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you’ve been affected in this way, we can help.

Financial guidance
Our financial guidance team can give you advice on mortgages, pensions, insurance, borrowing and savings.

Help accessing benefits
Our benefits advisers can offer advice and information on benefits, tax credits, grants and loans. They can help you work out what financial help you could be entitled to. They can also help you complete your forms and apply for benefits.

Macmillan Grants
Macmillan offers one-off payments to people with cancer. A grant can be for anything from heating bills or extra clothing to a much-needed break.

Call us on 0808 808 00 00 to speak to a financial guide or benefits adviser, or to find out more about Macmillan Grants. We can also tell you about benefits advisers in your area. Visit macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport to find out more about how we can help you with your finances.

Help with work and cancer

Whether you’re an employee, a carer, an employer or are self-employed, we can provide support and information to help you manage cancer at work. Visit macmillan.org.uk/work

Macmillan’s My Organiser app
This free mobile app can help you manage your treatment, from appointment times and contact details, to reminders for when to take your medication. Search ‘My Organiser’ on the Apple App Store or Google Play on your phone.
Other useful organisations

There are lots of other organisations that can give you information or support.

**Nutrition**

**British Dietetic Association (BDA)**
5th Floor, Charles House, 148/9 Great Charles Street, Queensway, Birmingham B3 3HT
**Tel** 0121 200 8080
**Email** info@bda.uk.com
**www.bda.uk.com**
Website includes an online directory to help you find a dietitian in your area.

**British Nutrition Foundation**
Imperial House, 6th Floor, 15–19 Kingsway, London WC2B 6UN
**Tel** 020 7557 7930
**Email** postbox@nutrition.org.uk
**www.nutrition.org.uk**
Website has information about healthy eating.

**Penny Brohn Cancer Centre**
Chapel Pill Lane, Pill, Bristol BS20 0HH
**Tel** 0845 123 2310
**Email** helpline@pennybrohn.org
**www.pennybrohncancer.org**
A national charity that works in combination with medical treatment to offer a unique combination of physical, emotional and spiritual support, using complementary therapies and self-help techniques.

**Exercise**

**Cancer Rehabilitation**
**www.canrehab.co.uk**
Runs training workshops on developing exercise-based cancer rehabilitation programmes.
Walking groups

Let’s Walk (Wales)
www.lets-walk-cymru.org.uk
Tel 02920 338 357

Paths for All (Scotland)
www.pathsforall.org.uk
Tel 01259 218 855

Walk Northern Ireland
www.walkni.com
Tel 028 9030 393

Walking for Health (England)
www.walkingforhealth.org.uk
Tel 020 7339 8541

National stop smoking services

Smokefree (England)
Tel 0800 022 4332
(Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm,
Sat–Sun, 11am–4pm)
www.smokefree.nhs.uk

Smokeline (Scotland)
Tel 0800 84 84 84
(Mon–Sun, 8am–10pm)
www.canstopsmoking.com

Smokers’ Helpline (Northern Ireland)
Tel 0808 812 8008
(Mon–Fri, 4pm–8pm)
www.want2stop.info

Stop Smoking Wales
Tel 0800 085 2219
(Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)
www.stopsmokingwales.com

General cancer support organisations

Cancer Black Care
79 Acton Lane,
London NW10 8UT
Tel 020 8961 4151
Email info@cancerblackcare.org.uk
www.cancerblackcare.org.uk
Offers information and support for people with cancer from ethnic communities, and their friends, carers and families.
Cancer Focus
Northern Ireland
40–44 Eglantine Avenue,
Belfast BT9 6DX
Tel 0800 783 3339
(Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm)
Email hello@cancerfocusni.org
www.cancerfocusni.org
Offers a variety of services
to people affected by cancer,
including a free helpline,
counselling and links to local
support groups.

Cancer Support Scotland
Calman Cancer Support
Centre, 75 Shelley Road,
Glasgow G12 0ZE
Tel 0800 652 4531
Email info@
cancersupportscotland.org
www.cancersupportscotland.org
Runs cancer support groups
throughout Scotland. Also offers
free complementary therapies
and counselling to anyone
affected by cancer.

Irish Cancer Society
43–45 Northumberland Road,
Dublin 4, Ireland
Tel 1800 200 700
(Mon–Thu, 9am–7pm,
Fri, 9am–5pm)
Email helpline@irishcancer.ie
www.cancer.ie
National cancer charity offering
information, support and care
to people affected by cancer.
You can talk to a specialist
cancer nurse online or by
phone. You can also use the
site’s message board.

Maggie’s Centres
1st Floor, One Waterloo Street,
Glasgow G2 6AY
Tel 0300 123 1801
Email enquiries@maggiescentres.org
www.maggiescentres.org
Provide information about
cancer, benefits advice,
and emotional or
psychological support.
Managing weight gain after cancer treatment

Tenovus
Head Office, Gleider House, Ty Glas Road, Cardiff CF14 5BD
Tel 0808 808 1010 (Mon–Sun, 8am–8pm)
www.tenovus.org.uk
Aims to help everyone get equal access to cancer treatment and support. Has mobile cancer support units, a free helpline, an ‘Ask the nurse’ service on the website and gives benefits advice.

Counselling and emotional support

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
BACP House, 15 St John’s Business Park, Lutterworth LE17 4HB
Tel 01455 883 300
Email bacp@bacp.co.uk
www.bacp.co.uk
Signposts people to appropriate counselling services. You can search for a qualified counsellor at itsgoodtotalk.org.uk

Financial or legal advice and information

Benefit Enquiry Line
Northern Ireland
Tel 0800 220 674 (Mon–Wed and Fri, 9am–5pm, Thu, 10am–5pm)
Textphone 0800 243 787
www.nidirect.gov.uk/moneytax-and-benefits
Provides information and advice about disability benefits and carers’ benefits in Northern Ireland.

British Red Cross
UK Office, 44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL
Tel 0344 871 11 11
Email information@redcross.org.uk
www.redcross.org.uk
Offers a range of health and social care services, such as care in the home, a medical equipment loan service and a transport service.
Citizens Advice
Provides advice on a variety of issues including financial, legal, housing and employment issues. Find details for your local office in the phone book or on one of the following websites:

England and Wales
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Scotland
www.cas.org.uk

Northern Ireland
www.citizensadvice.co.uk

You can also find advice online in a range of languages at adviceguide.org.uk

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Disability Benefits Helpline
0345 605 6055
Textphone 0345 604 5312
Personal Independence Payment Helpline
0345 850 3322
Textphone 0345 601 6677
Carer’s Allowance Unit
0345 608 4321
Textphone 0345 604 5312
www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

Manages state benefits in England, Scotland and Wales. You can apply for benefits and find information online or through its helplines.

Gov.uk
www.gov.uk
Has comprehensive information about social security benefits and public services.
Unbiased
Tel 0330 1000 755
(Mon–Fri 9am–5pm)
Email adviser@unbiased.co.uk
www.unbiased.co.uk
On the website you can search for qualified advisers who specialise in giving financial, mortgage, accounting or legal advice. Also gives equipment and advice on living with a disability.

Support for older people

Age UK
Tel (England)
0800 169 2081
Tel (Scotland)
0333 32 32 400
Tel (Northern Ireland)
0808 808 7575
Tel (Wales)
08000 223 444
(Mon–Sun, 8am–7pm)
www.ageuk.org.uk
Provides information and advice for older people via the website and advice line. Also publishes impartial and informative factsheets and advice guides.

Support for young people

Teenage Cancer Trust
3rd Floor, 93 Newman Street, London W1T 3EZ
Tel 020 7612 0370
www.teenagecancertrust.org
Devoted to improving the lives of teenagers and young adults with cancer. Runs a support network for young people with cancer, and their friends and families.

You can search for more organisations on our website at macmillan.org.uk/organisations or call us on 0808 808 00 00.
YOUR NOTES AND QUESTIONS
Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up-to-date, but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it. Some photographs are of models.

Thanks

This booklet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support’s Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by Dr Tim Iveson, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Macmillan Chief Medical Editor.

With thanks to: Loriane Gillespie, Specialist Oncology Dietitian; Barbara Parry, Senior Research Dietitian; and Dr Robert Thomas, Clinical Oncologist. Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories.

Sources

We’ve listed a sample of the sources used in the publication below. If you’d like further information about the sources we use, please contact us at bookletfeedback@macmillan.org.uk


Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It’s just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer. They’re produced by our cancer information specialists who, along with our nurses, benefits advisers, campaigners and volunteers, are part of the Macmillan team. When people are facing the toughest fight of their lives, we’re there to support them every step of the way.

We want to make sure no one has to go through cancer alone, so we need more people to help us. When the time is right for you, here are some ways in which you can become a part of our team.

**5 WAYS YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE WITH CANCER**

**Share your cancer experience**
Support people living with cancer by telling your story, online, in the media or face to face.

**Campaign for change**
We need your help to make sure everyone gets the right support. Take an action, big or small, for better cancer care.

**Help someone in your community**
A lift to an appointment. Help with the shopping. Or just a cup of tea and a chat. Could you lend a hand?

**Raise money**
Whatever you like doing you can raise money to help. Take part in one of our events or create your own.

**Give money**
Big or small, every penny helps. To make a one-off donation see over.

**Call us to find out more**
0300 1000 200
macmillan.org.uk/getinvolved
Please fill in your personal details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other
Name
Surname
Address

Postcode
Phone
Email

Please accept my gift of £
(Please delete as appropriate)
I enclose a cheque / postal order / Charity Voucher made payable to Macmillan Cancer Support

OR debit my:
Visa / MasterCard / CAF Charity Card / Switch / Maestro

Card number

Valid from
Expiry date

Issue no
Security number

Signature

Date / / 

Don’t let the taxman keep your money

Do you pay tax? If so, your gift will be worth 25% more to us – at no extra cost to you. All you have to do is tick the box below, and the tax office will give 25p for every pound you give.

☐ I am a UK tax payer and I would like Macmillan Cancer Support to treat all donations I make or have made to Macmillan Cancer Support in the last 4 years as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise.

I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand Macmillan Cancer Support will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Macmillan Cancer Support and our trading companies would like to hold your details in order to contact you about our fundraising, campaigning and services for people affected by cancer. If you would prefer us not to use your details in this way please tick this box. ☐

In order to carry out our work we may need to pass your details to agents or partners who act on our behalf.

If you’d rather donate online go to macmillan.org.uk/donate

Please cut out this form and return it in an envelope (no stamp required) to: Supporter Donations, Macmillan Cancer Support, FREEPOST LON15851, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ

27530
More than one in three of us will get cancer. For most of us it will be the toughest fight we ever face. And the feelings of isolation and loneliness that so many people experience make it even harder. But you don’t have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way.

We are the nurses and therapists helping you through treatment. The experts on the end of the phone. The advisers telling you which benefits you’re entitled to. The volunteers giving you a hand with the everyday things. The campaigners improving cancer care. The community there for you online, any time. The supporters who make it all possible.

Together, we are all Macmillan Cancer Support.

For cancer support every step of the way, call Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00 (Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm) or visit macmillan.org.uk