

WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

A practical guide to living with and after cancer

FEEL MORE LIKE YOU

Expert advice on caring for your skin,
nails and hair during cancer treatment



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About this booklet

With some cancer treatments you may see changes in your skin, nails and hair. These side effects are usually temporary and should gradually improve after your treatment finishes. Changes to your appearance can be hard to deal with. They can affect how you see your body and how you feel about it (body image).

The information in this booklet is for women and men. We explain how certain treatments may cause changes to your appearance. We also give you advice about ways you can manage changes to your skin, nails and hair to help you to feel more like you again.

There is also information about helpful organisations and where you can get more support in your area.

We have included some comments from people affected by the issues discussed in this booklet, which you may find helpful. They have chosen to share their story with us on our Online Community [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community) We have also included quotes from Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors.

We have another booklet called **Body image and cancer**. It has more information about coping with changes to your body and concerns about your body image.

Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors

As well as reading this booklet, you can speak to a Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor. These are No 7 Advisors who are based in some Boots stores. They are trained by Boots UK and Macmillan to help people manage the visible side effects of cancer treatments.

A Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor can give you face-to-face expert advice about coping with changes to your skin, nails and hair during treatment. They can show you how to use products to cover up changes and make the most of your features. This can help you to look good and feel more confident. Visit [boots.com/storelocator](https://www.boots.com/storelocator) to find your nearest Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor.

Local support

If there isn't a Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor in your area, you can usually find other support locally. Some hospitals and support groups run hair and beauty workshops for people affected by cancer. Look Good Feel Better and HeadStrong (see page 63) run these workshops. Look Good Feel Better has a separate website for men.

You can ask your cancer nurse specialist about the services available in your area, or call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**.

'The beauty advisors were a lot of fun and really nice. The whole thing really cheered me up. I think it's a wonderful service.'

Rebecca

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Your data and the cancer registry

When you are diagnosed with cancer in the UK, some information about you and your health is collected in a cancer registry. This is used to plan and improve health and care services. Your hospital will usually give this information to the registry automatically. There are strict rules to make sure the information is kept safely and securely. It will only be used for your direct care or for health and social care planning and research.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions. If you do not want your information included in the registry, you can contact the cancer registry in your country to opt out. You can find more information at [macmillan.org.uk/cancerregistry](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancerregistry)



HOW CANCER TREATMENTS MAY AFFECT YOUR APPEARANCE

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Changes caused by cancer treatments

Changes to the condition and appearance of your skin, nails and hair depend on the cancer drug or treatment you're having. This chapter briefly explains how some treatments may affect your skin, nails and hair.

Your cancer team may give you advice on looking after your skin and products to use or to avoid. It is very important to follow their advice.



Visit our website [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk) to find out more information about the side effects of different drugs and treatments and their side effects. Or, you can call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a cancer support specialist.

Chemotherapy drugs

Chemotherapy treatment is the most common cause of skin, nail and hair changes. There are different chemotherapy drugs and you may have a combination of drugs. Any side effects you have will depend on the individual drugs. We have more information about chemotherapy.

Skin

During treatment your skin may become dry and more sensitive. Some chemotherapy drugs make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Certain drugs may make the palms of your hands or soles of your feet red and sore (palmar-plantar syndrome). Your specialist can give you advice and may reduce the dose of the drug.

Because you're at more risk of getting an infection, you'll be advised to avoid wet shaving. Using an electric razor is less likely to cause cuts.

Some people have medicines called steroids given with chemotherapy. Steroids may make your skin more likely to get spots and redden.

Nails

Your nails may become more brittle and develop lines or ridges. Or, they may become discoloured. The skin around your nails may get dry and frayed.

Hair

Some chemotherapy drugs cause your hair to thin. Other drugs may cause you to lose all the hair on your head. Depending on the drug, some people also lose hair from other parts of the body. This can include eyebrows, eyelashes, facial hair and body hair such as chest, underarm or pubic hair. Ask your cancer specialist or nurse if the drugs you are having cause hair loss and if this is likely to include body hair.



You can also get helpful information from our booklet **Coping with hair loss** or visit [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)



Targeted therapies

Targeted therapy drugs (sometimes called biological therapies) can cause skin, nail and hair changes.

Skin

Targeted therapies can make your skin dry, itchy and more sensitive. Skin rashes are also common. Some people develop skin changes that look like acne. Targeted therapies can also make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Some drugs may make the palms of your hands or soles of your feet red and sore (palmar-plantar syndrome). Your specialist can give you advice and may reduce the dose of the drug.

Nails

Your nails may become brittle and break easily. Or, they may become discoloured.

Hair

Some targeted therapy drugs may make hair thinner, curlier or drier than usual. Men sometimes find that their facial hair grows more slowly.

Certain drugs may cause facial hair to grow faster, or eyebrows or eyelashes to grow longer and curlier. Your nurse specialist will give you advice on how to manage these changes.

Radiotherapy

Skin

Radiotherapy can cause changes to your skin but only in the area being treated. Your skin may become red, sore or itchy. If you have dark skin, it may become darker with a blue or black tinge. The radiographers or nurses will tell you how to look after your skin. You should only use products they recommend on your skin in the area being treated. You should avoid using any other products.

If you have radiotherapy to an area where you normally shave, ask the radiographers or nurses for advice. If you are having radiotherapy to your armpit, you may be given advice on using deodorant. They may suggest using unperfumed and alcohol-free deodorants if the skin in your armpit becomes sensitive.

After radiotherapy you'll need to protect the area of treated skin from the sun for at least a year (see page 23).

Hair

Radiotherapy to the head may cause hair loss. If you are having radiotherapy to the breast or pelvis (the area between the hips) you are likely to lose hair in that area.



Hormonal therapy

Hormonal therapy drugs are used to treat cancers such as breast and prostate cancer. They can affect your skin, nails and hair but the effects are usually mild. Hormonal therapies may cause dry skin and rashes. Rarely, they may also cause spots.

'Your skin can change during treatment and I love being able to give advice on suitable products. It can make a real difference and really lift people's spirits.

We must not forget the men! Men suffer with skin changes too. It's not nice suffering in silence. I especially love advising on hand care with hand massage and regular cream application. It can make a real difference and always goes down very well in group sessions.

I really enjoy advising on eyebrows. Ladies love the natural look we can create with pencils and powders.'

Alix, Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor



MANAGING CHANGES TO YOUR SKIN

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Dry skin

If you have dry skin, these tips may help:

- Wash with lukewarm water using mild, unperfumed, soap-free cleansers. Soap will make your skin drier.
- Use unperfumed bath and shower products. If your skin feels sensitive or you're having a targeted therapy drug, avoid products containing colouring.
- Do not have long, hot showers or baths as this will make your skin drier. Pat your skin dry with a clean, soft towel. Don't rub your skin with the towel.
- Moisturise your skin regularly to keep it supple and less likely to dry out and become itchy. Use lotions, creams or ointments soon after you've washed.
- Keep your nails short to protect your skin from scratches.
- If you have dry or sore lips, use a lip balm made from moisturising ingredients such as petroleum jelly (Vaseline®), shea butter or glycerine.



Always tell your cancer specialist or nurse about changes to your skin and follow the advice they give you.

Try these tips for cleansing your face:

- Use a gentle cleanser that doesn't remove the moisture from your skin. Creamy cleansers could be a good option. Put the cleanser on carefully and avoid your eyes.
- Remove cleansers with a damp cotton wool pad or a clean, damp flannel. This will leave your skin feeling soft and clean.
- If you use a toner, avoid products containing alcohol, which can dry your skin.

'My skin used to be quite oily, but chemotherapy changed it completely and it became very dry and flaky. It was difficult going back to the drawing board. Everything I'd normally use didn't really work for me any more.'

Vicki

Using moisturiser

If you have dry skin, use a moisturiser at least twice a day on your face and body. You may need a richer moisturiser than you usually use. Don't use products containing sodium lauryl sulphate, especially if you have eczema. This can irritate the skin.

Moisturisers containing oatmeal can be soothing for dry or sore skin. Try tying a muslin bag filled with oatmeal over your bath tap and letting the water run through. This can be good way to soothe and soften your skin in the bath.

If your skin is very dry, it can become itchy. Using an emollient or moisturising cream that contains oatmeal, menthol or 10% urea may help relieve the itchiness. Ask your cancer nurse specialist or oncology team for advice. They may prescribe you something to reduce itching.

If you're having radiotherapy or targeted therapies, the staff at the hospital will talk to you about caring for your skin. Check with them first before using any skin products.

'I had a lady in whose husband was going through cancer treatment and was having problems with dry skin. So I talked her through the options and recommended a moisturiser for men.'

Jay, Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor



Oily skin

If your skin is oily, the following tips will help:

- Use a good cleanser and a light, oil-free moisturiser to help keep your skin in good condition.
- A wash-off cleanser can be a good option. Gently work the cleanser into your skin, before washing it off.
- Using a soft flannel or muslin cloth can help to remove all traces of the cleanser and help your skin feel even cleaner.
- Be careful not to overwork your skin. Avoid exfoliating products or harsh products that strip the skin of moisture.

If you're having chemotherapy, your skin may become less oily during treatment.

Rashes or spots

If you develop a rash, always get it checked by your specialist doctor or nurse straight away. They will know the cause and be able to give you advice.

Some targeted therapies can cause a rash or spots that look like acne. But this isn't caused by acne. Don't use anti-acne products, as they will make the problem worse. Your cancer nurse specialist or doctor can give you treatment that will help.

Your specialist may prescribe creams or drugs to help if you develop itchy skin or a rash. Always tell your specialist doctor or nurse if you get a rash.



Taking care in the sun

Certain drugs and treatments can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Here are some tips to protect your skin if you're out in the sun:

- Wear loose clothes made of cotton or natural fibres to cover up.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and neck.
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day. This is usually between 11am and 3pm.
- Apply a sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least SPF 30. Choose one that protects skin against UVA and UVB rays. Remember, the best way to protect your skin is to cover up and to stay out of strong sunlight.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun.

Changes in your skin tone

As your treatment goes on, you may notice changes in your skin tone or in the brightness of your complexion. The following tips may help:

Using foundation

- If you wear foundation, you may need to change from your usual shade.
- Choose a base colour that isn't visible at your jawline. Even a sheer or light foundation will help to even out your skin tone.
- Tinted moisturiser can work well if you're not used to wearing a lot of make-up, or prefer not to.

Applying a bronzer

- Use a make-up brush to apply bronzer lightly to your forehead, cheekbones and down the middle of your nose. This adds a natural wash of colour to the face.
- Start by adding a small amount and gently build this up. Finish by buffing really well into the skin so there are no obvious lines.

You could ask a Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor about other make-up options to improve your skin tone.

Using a concealer

You can use a concealer under and over foundation, or on its own. It can hide blemishes or dark circles under your eyes. It is helpful if you need a quick cover-up.

Flushed skin

A green-tinted primer can help tone down rosy skin and even out the colour on your cheeks, nose and chin. But try to use these products sparingly. When you put on the primer, pat it gently on to your skin. Rubbing your skin can make the redness worse.

If you have flushed skin, try a medium-coverage foundation with sun protection. Make sure the foundation matches the areas of your face that are less red. Pat the foundation over the primer to avoid disturbing it.

Hygiene

Cancer treatments can make you more at risk of getting an infection. Here are some tips to keep your make-up routine as clean as possible:

- Wash your hands before you apply creams or make-up.
- Don't share towels or flannels with other people.
- Check expiry dates on make-up.
- Don't share make-up or applicators with anyone else.
- When using mascara, try not to pump the wand into the tube (this reduces the risk of introducing bacteria).
- Take eye make-up off using a new cotton pad for each eye to avoid spreading any possible infection.
- Clean your make-up brushes or sponges regularly, or use disposable sponges.
- Put the tops or lids back on any tubes or jars when you've finished using them.





MANAGING CHANGES TO YOUR NAILS

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Looking after your nails

There are different ways to help look after your fingernails and toenails:

- Wear protective gloves when doing housework or gardening. This protects your nails and skin from detergents, chemicals and injury. It also protects your hands from too much exposure to water, which may cause fungal infections of the nail bed.
- Wear comfortable shoes and cotton socks. Avoid anything that is tight-fitting or rubs.
- Clip your fingernails and toenails to keep them short. This makes nail changes less noticeable. Do not use scissors.
- Moisturise regularly using a hand, foot and nail cream. Try using a nail-strengthening cream.
- Massaging a good cuticle cream into your cuticles helps prevent dryness, splitting and hangnails. Do not cut your cuticles.
- Use an emery board to keep your nails short and smooth, and to avoid snagging.
- When filing your nails, draw the emery board across them in one direction only. Do not go backwards and forwards with it. This helps to prevent nails splitting further.



Your nails should start to go back to normal after treatment with chemotherapy or targeted therapy finishes.



Disguising nail changes

There are different ways to help disguise changes to your nails:

- Dark nail polish helps disguise discoloured nails, but avoid nail polish if your nails are split or sore.
- Try water-based polishes. They contain less harsh chemicals.
- Use a nail polish remover that doesn't contain acetone or other harsh solvents.
- Do not use false nails during treatment or when your nails are sore or damaged.

'I first noticed the ridges appear on my fingernails, then they felt bruised as if I had shut my fingers in a door. Now they're turning a lovely shade of brown/yellow! I have been massaging cuticle cream into my nails, as the cuticles feel really dry and a bit sore.'

Liz

'I'd recommend keeping your nails short so they don't catch on things and hurt you. And wear gloves whenever you can. I have gloves everywhere – cotton ones for sleeping, disposable ones for when I'm cooking or looking after the animals, marigolds for doing the dishes and soft comfy ones in my handbag for when I'm out and about. And watch out for signs of infection, which would make your nails quite sore and would need treatment.'

Maggie





MANAGING CHANGES TO YOUR HAIR

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Coping with hair loss

Some treatments cause changes to the texture and condition of your hair. It may become drier or more brittle. The treatments may also cause hair thinning or complete hair loss. Chemotherapy is the most common cause of complete hair loss. Your hair usually starts to grow back a few months after chemotherapy is over.

With some chemotherapy drugs, it may be possible to prevent or reduce hair loss by using a cold cap. This works by reducing blood flow and the amount of drugs reaching the scalp. Your cancer nurse specialist or doctor can tell you if this is suitable for you.

If you have radiotherapy, you usually lose the hair in the treatment area but not anywhere else. Hair loss after radiotherapy is sometimes permanent.

Before treatment some people choose to cut their hair shorter rather than wait for it to fall out. The weight of long hair can pull on the scalp and make your hair fall out faster. Cutting it shorter may help to give you a sense of control over your appearance.

If you want to remove all your hair, use clippers. Shaving with a blade or razor can lead to cuts and infections.

'I had my hair shaved (grade 4) in the third week after my first chemo. I'd had a strange scalp feeling which stopped after I'd been shaved. It was instantly more manageable and I was not as upset as I thought I would be. I was taking control of something!'

Sue



If you're thinking about wearing a wig, ask your nurse about this early on. This means they can match the wig as closely as possible to your own hair. You'll also be prepared if you lose your hair more quickly than expected.

NHS wigs are free if you live in Scotland or Wales. Health Service wigs are free if you live in Northern Ireland. In England, you may be entitled to a free wig on the NHS if you're having, or have had, cancer treatment and you meet certain criteria. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/hairloss](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/hairloss) or speak to your nurse specialist to find out more.

Other options for covering up hair loss include:

- hats
- scarves
- turbans.

It is important to do whatever makes you feel most comfortable. If you're not wearing a wig, you can wear a hat or scarf to protect your head from the sun, cold or wind. Hats and scarves can also add a bit of colour and style to your appearance.

'I did find the wig hard going, so I only wore it for short periods of time. I felt most comfy in normal scarves that I learnt to tie fancily. Go on YouTube, there are loads of ideas. Hats or berets over long wigs are fab for winter. I would cover all bases until you find what you find most comfy. I found the variety helped.'

Julia

Looking after your hair

These tips can help you to care for your hair if it is dry, brittle, thinning, or falling out due to treatment:

- Only use gentle hair products and non-medicated shampoo.
- Only apply conditioner to the middle lengths of hair in small sections and only if your hair is long enough.
- Use a wide-toothed comb when your hair is wet and more likely to get damaged. Start combing the ends of your hair first to reduce tangles. Combs cause less damage than brushes.
- Use brushes that have wide-spaced prongs rather than full-bristled brushes.
- Avoid using hairdryers, straighteners and curling tongs.



Our booklet **Coping with hair loss** has more detailed information and practical tips to help you look after your hair during and after cancer treatment.



MANAGING CHANGES TO YOUR EYEBROWS AND EYELASHES

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Changes to your eyebrows and eyelashes

Some cancer drugs may cause your eyebrows and eyelashes to become thinner or to fall out completely. Your specialist nurse can tell you if this is likely. It depends on the drugs and the dose you have.

Losing your eyebrows and eyelashes can change your appearance. This can be upsetting, but they usually grow back.

You may find your eyelashes and eyebrows fall out later than the hair on your head. Sometimes this happens more gradually during treatment or after treatment has finished.

There are things you can do to help disguise these changes. Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors can help you with the techniques described in this chapter. You can also see an advice video about these techniques at [boots.com/macmillan](https://www.boots.com/macmillan)

'Many women with cancer lose their hair, their eyebrows, their eyelashes and, with it, their confidence. Seeing what these ladies go through makes it even more important to be able to give something back to them by offering tips and advice on how to apply make-up.'

Sam, Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor

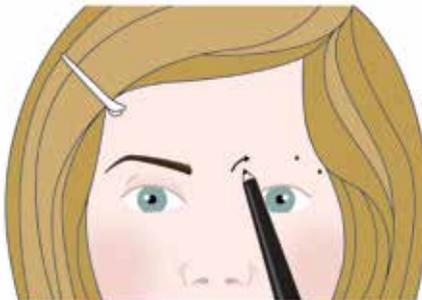
Your eyebrows

You can redraw eyebrows with an eyebrow pencil. Use one slightly lighter than your normal hair colour. Another natural-looking way to redraw the eyebrows is by applying eyeshadow powder with a make-up brush.

Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors can show you how to redraw your eyebrows. It can be difficult to do this at first if you're not used to it. You can also visit [boots.com/macmillan](https://www.boots.com/macmillan) to watch a video about redrawing your eyebrows.

Creating natural-looking eyebrows

- If possible, practise drawing on your eyebrows before treatment begins to get used to following the shape and arch of your brow. You could take a close-up photo of yourself before treatment, so you can remember exactly where your eyebrows were and what they looked like.
- Try drawing a dot of colour above the outer and inner corners of each eye, and a dot where you think you'll create an arch. This way, you can check for symmetry before you start drawing (see the illustration below).



- Use your brow bone and your eyes to work out where your brows should be. Place the eyebrow pencil alongside your nose and skirt the outer corner of your eye at a 45 degree angle (see the illustration below). This shows where a natural brow would start and finish.



- Using a lighter pencil than your normal hair colour draw from the centre of the browline outward, using light, feathery strokes (see the illustration below). Lots of tiny strokes with the pencil will look better than a single line.



- Create a brow that's thicker-looking at the inner end (nearest to your nose) and thinner at the outer edge.
- Light pressure is all you need. Comb through the colour with an eyebrow wand to give a more natural appearance.
- Check for symmetry when you move on to your other eye (see the illustration below). No two brows are identical so just make them look more or less the same, not identical.



Some men and women find that thick-rimmed glasses add character to their face and hide missing eyebrows. You can also use false eyebrows.

Some people choose to have permanent or temporary tattooing to create new eyebrows. But this shouldn't be done during treatment. For more information visit macmillan.org.uk/hairloss or call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**.

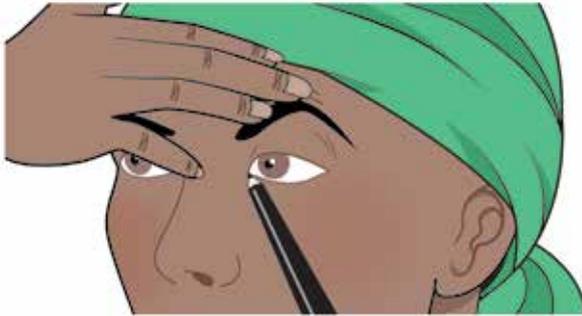
Long and thick eyebrows

Certain types of targeted therapy may cause your eyebrows to grow long and thick. If this happens, it is fine to trim them.

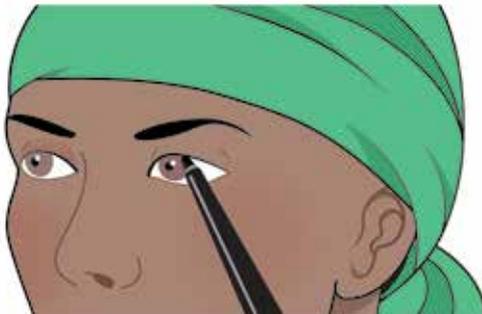
Your eyelashes

There are different make-up tips you can try to disguise thin eyelashes or if your eyelashes fall out completely:

- Use a soft eyeliner and smudger to define your eyes and create the illusion of eyelashes.
- Lift the skin at your eyebrow when applying the make-up (see the illustration below). This will tighten your skin and make the pencil easier to apply.



- Use soft strokes along the eyelash line by applying a smudger to soften the line and push colour further into the lashes.
- Apply the make-up lightly to make your eyelashes well defined and natural looking (see the illustration below).



- Use a gentle, teasing action when applying mascara. A wand with short bristles may be easier to use on short and sparse eyelashes.
- If you want to wear false eyelashes, check with your cancer nurse specialist or cancer team first. The glue may irritate sensitive skin.

Looking after your eyelashes

- Do not use eyelash curlers. They can damage fragile eyelashes.
- Try not to rub your eyes to help prevent you losing eyelashes.
- When you're removing eye make-up, hold a cotton pad soaked in eye make-up remover to your eye for a couple of seconds, before gently wiping away. This stops you pulling too much on your lashes.
- Avoid waterproof mascara. It can be harder to remove. If your eyes are sensitive, try using mascara that dissolves in warm water.

'A lady I saw told me she had no lashes because of her treatment. But I could see very fine, baby lashes. So I gently brushed over the mascara, and she looked fabulous. She couldn't believe the result.'

Karen, Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor

Long or ingrowing eyelashes

Some targeted therapy drugs can cause your eyelashes to grow very long or grow inwards. This can irritate your eyes. You may need to have your eyelashes trimmed by a nurse. Do not try to do this yourself. You should get advice from your nurse or doctor.

'I was concerned about losing my eyebrows and eyelashes, as they frame your face so much and I knew I'd really see the difference when they were gone. Making an effort with my appearance was a way of keeping a sense of normality for myself.'

Jeni





YOUR FEELINGS

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Coping with your feelings

Coping with changes to your appearance during and after treatment can be tough, even if the changes are temporary, as they often are. Feeling unhappy about how you look can affect your confidence, how you feel about your body and your relationships.

Some people feel they shouldn't worry about changes to their appearance when they're having cancer treatment. But it's natural to feel upset about losing your hair or changes to your skin or nails. And for some people, these issues can be a major concern during treatment.

Getting emotional support

There is different support to help you manage changes to your appearance and find ways to cope. We hope our tips and suggestions help you find out what works best for you and make you feel more confident and better about yourself.

Talking to people close to you about how you're feeling can be a positive step. If others know how you feel, it's easier for them to support you.

Sharing experiences with people in the same situation can also help. Try the Macmillan Online Community – [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community) Or ask your cancer nurse specialist or oncology team to put you in touch with a local support group.



Our booklet on **Body image and cancer** has advice on coping with different feelings and other people's reactions. There is also practical advice and suggestions on how to improve your body image and where to get help and support.

You can call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm, to speak to cancer support specialists about any emotional or practical issues.



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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.



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 guidance
- 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](https://www.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](https://www.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 guidance 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.

Beauty, hair loss and cancer support organisations

Cancer Hair Care

The Caring Hair Studio,
5A Middle Row,
Stevenage SG1 3AN

Tel 01438 311322

(Wed–Fri, 10am–4pm)

Email

support@cancerhaircare.com

www.cancerhaircare.com

Website provides advice and practical tips on hair loss due to cancer treatment.

Videos show how to put on wigs and scarves and create eyebrows and eyelashes.

Herfordshire salon offers free sessions on scarves, make-up and wig cutting.

Changing Faces

The Squire Centre,
33–37 University Street,
London WC1E 6JN

Tel 0300 0120 275

Email

info@changingfaces.org.uk

www.changingfaces.org.uk

A charity for people with conditions, marks or scars that affect their appearance.

Can arrange consultations with skin camouflage specialists, who can teach people to self-apply specialist cover creams.

Institute of Trichologists

107 Trinity Road,
Upper Tooting,
London SW17 7SQ
Tel 0845 604 4657

Email

admin@trichologists.org.uk

www.trichologists.org.uk

The foremost professional association for trichologists (hair health specialists) in the world. Gives information about hair health and hair loss.

Look Good Feel Better

West Hill House,
32 West Hill, Epsom KT19 8JD
Tel 01372 747 500

Email info@lgfb.co.uk

www.lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk

A support service for women and teenagers living with cancer. Holds free skincare and make-up workshops to help combat the visible side effects of cancer treatment and, in turn, boost confidence and well-being.

Look Good Feel Better For Men

www.lookgoodfeelbetterformen.org

Has tips to help men deal with the side effects of cancer treatments on hair, skin, body and mind.

Specialist hair services**Breast Cancer Care's HeadStrong Service**

Helpline 0808 800 6000
www.breastcancercare.org.uk

A free advisory service run by specially trained volunteers. Offers practical information and support on an individual appointment basis. You can attend as many times as you like and can bring along a companion for support. Available at various locations in the UK – see the website for further details.

My New Hair

PO Box 626,

Durham DH1 9LJ

Email info@mynewhair.org

www.mynewhair.org

A charity with a network of salons that provide a wig-styling service for people with cancer and medical hair loss. The website has a list of recommended salons that have worked with Trevor Sorbie to ensure they offer expert advice and styling to make your wig individual to you. It also has information about hair loss and wigs. Consultations are free. Use the salons' cut and blow-dry price list for a guide to styling charges, and contact the salons directly for specific prices. Some salons offer their service for free.

Strength in Style with Toni & Guy

Tel 0808 808 00 00

**macmillan.org.uk/
strengthinstyle**

Macmillan is working in partnership with Toni & Guy to provide specialist haircare for people affected by cancer. Strength in Style consultants, who have been specially trained in the effects of cancer treatment on hair, can help clients with choosing, fitting, adjusting and cutting wigs. They also advise on hair as it grows again so that people affected by cancer can have one point of contact to help them deal with hair loss and regrowth.

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, their friends, carers and families.

Cancer Focus

Northern Ireland

40–44 Eglantine Avenue,
Belfast BT9 6DX

Helpline 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 Research UK

Angel Building,
407 St John Street,
London EC1V 4AD

Tel 0300 123 1022

www.cancerhelp.org.uk

Has patient information on all types of cancer and has a clinical trials database.

Cancer Support Scotland

The Calman Centre,
75 Shelley Road,
Glasgow G12 0ZE

Tel 0800 652 4531

Email info@

cancersupportscotland.org

**www.cancersupport
scotland.org**

Runs cancer support groups throughout Scotland. Also offers free complementary therapies and counselling to anyone affected by cancer.

Macmillan Cancer Voices

**www.macmillan.org.uk/
cancervoices**

A UK-wide network that enables people who have or have had cancer, and those close to them such as family and carers, to speak out about their experience of cancer.

Maggie's Centres

20 St James Street,
London W6 9RW

Tel 0300 123 1801

Email enquiries@
maggiescentres.org

www.maggiescentres.org

Provides information about cancer, benefits advice, and emotional or psychological support.

Penny Brohn Cancer Care

Chapel Pill Lane,
Pill, Bristol BS20 0HH

Helpline 0845 123 2310
(Mon–Fri, 9.30am–5pm,
Wed 6–8pm)

Email
helpline@pennybrohn.org

**www.pennybrohn
cancercare.org**

Offers a combination of physical, emotional and spiritual support, using complementary therapies and self-help techniques.

Tenovus

Head Office,
Gleider House,
Ty Glas Road,
Cardiff CF14 5BD

Helpline 0808 808 1010
(Mon–Sun, 8am–8pm)

Email info@
tenovuscancercare.org.uk

www.tenovus.org.uk

Aims to help everyone get equal access to cancer treatment and support. Funds research and provides support such as mobile cancer support units, a free helpline, an 'Ask the nurse' service on the website and benefits advice.

General health information

Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

www.hscni.net

Provides information about health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

Healthtalk

Email

info@healthtalkonline.org

www.healthtalk.org

**www.youthhealthtalk.org
(site for young people)**

Has information about cancer, and videos and audio clips of people's experiences.

National Cancer Institute – National Institute of Health – USA

www.cancer.gov

Gives information on cancer and treatments.

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

The UK's biggest health information website.
Has service information for England.

NHS Direct Wales

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

NHS health information site for Wales.

NHS Inform

www.nhsinform.co.uk

NHS health information site for Scotland.

Patient UK

www.patient.co.uk

Provides people in the UK with information about health and disease. Includes evidence-based information leaflets on a wide variety of medical and health topics. Also reviews and links to many health- and illness-related websites.

Counselling and emotional support

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

BACP House,
15 St John's Business Park,
Lutterworth,
Leicestershire LE17 4HB

Tel 01455 883 300

Email bacp@bacp.co.uk

www.bacp.co.uk

Promotes awareness of counselling and signposts people to appropriate services. You can search for a qualified counsellor at itsgoodtotalk.org.uk

Samaritans

Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK,
Chris, PO Box 9090,
Stirling FK8 2SA

Helpline 116 123

Email jo@samaritans.org

www.samaritans.org

Provides confidential and non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

2nd Floor, Edward House,
2 Wakley Street,
London EC1V 7LT

Tel 020 7014 9955

Email info@ukcp.org.uk

www.psychotherapy.org.uk

Holds the national register of psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors, listing practitioners who meet exacting standards and training requirements.



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

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 photos 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 our Senior Medical Editor, Dr Tim Iveson, Macmillan Consultant Medical Oncologist.

With thanks to: Helen Eadsworth, Boots Learning and Development Designer – No 7 and Beauty; Katie Edge, Macmillan Chemotherapy Sister; Sharon Hulley, Macmillan Skin Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist; Jenny King, Chemotherapy Nurse Specialist; and Paik Hang Ooi, Senior Pharmacist – Oncology/Haematology. Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories.

Sources

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

Cororve Gingeret M, et al. Managing body image difficulties of adult cancer patients. *Cancer*. 2014. Vol. 5.

Carr Susan V. The impact of cancer and its therapies on body image and sexuality in psychological aspects of cancer. Springer US. 2013.

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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.



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

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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

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

Hard of hearing? Use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.

Non-English speaker? Interpreters available.

Braille and large print versions on request.

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