COPING WITH FATIGUE (TIREDNESS)
About this booklet

This booklet is about fatigue due to cancer or its treatment. This is sometimes known as cancer-related fatigue (CRF). Fatigue means feeling very tired or exhausted all or most of the time. The tiredness is not relieved by rest and can affect you physically, psychologically and emotionally.

People who have fatigue have little or no energy. You may also find it difficult to do simple, everyday things that we usually take for granted.

We hope this booklet answers some of your questions about fatigue and helps you find ways of coping with it. We have also listed other sources of support and information, which we hope you’ll find useful.

The booklet contains a lot of information. You may find it difficult to read all in one go if you are feeling tired. You can use the contents list to help you dip into different sections.

In this booklet, we’ve included comments from people who have fatigue, which you may find helpful. They are from members of our online community (macmillan.org.uk/community) and from the website healthtalk.org Some names have been changed. Some quotes are from Jane, who is on the front of this booklet. She has chosen to share her story with us.
If you would 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

Turn to pages 83–88 for some useful addresses and websites. You’ll find a useful fatigue diary in the middle of this booklet. Here you can write down the times when you feel your best and when you feel most tired. There’s also room on page 89 for you to write down any notes or questions you have for your healthcare team.

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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FATIGUE AND ITS EFFECTS

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Fatigue and cancer

Fatigue is a very common problem for people with cancer.

As many as nine out of ten people with cancer (90%) may feel fatigued at some time. The causes of cancer-related fatigue (CRF) are not really understood. It may be due to the cancer itself or the symptoms caused by the cancer. It can also be a side effect of treatment.

Fatigue can be especially difficult to deal with when you’re already trying to cope with cancer. You may feel very tired or exhausted all or most of the time. This can be frustrating and feel overwhelming at times. Many people find their fatigue is distressing and has as much impact as the other side effects of cancer treatment.

CRF is different from the tiredness and fatigue that someone without cancer may get. People with cancer may get tired much more quickly after less activity. When healthy people get fatigued, it’s usually relieved by rest and sleep, whereas CRF isn’t. The fatigue usually gets better after treatment finishes, but it may continue for many months, or sometimes years.

It’s important to tell your doctors and nurses about your fatigue and how it makes you feel, without playing it down. There are ways they may be able to help. For example, treating the causes of fatigue, such as anaemia or sleeplessness, can help (see pages 12–23).

There are also things you can do for yourself that may help you cope. For example, pacing yourself during the day can be very effective. Research tells us that one of the best things you can do to help manage your fatigue is to stay active and exercise in a way that feels positive to you (see pages 32–35).
The effects of fatigue

Fatigue can affect all areas of your life. You may be too tired to take part in daily activities, relationships and social events. It affects everyone differently and can cause many different symptoms. Some people find their fatigue is very mild and doesn’t interfere much with their daily life. But for others, it’s very disruptive.

The different levels of fatigue are described in the fatigue diary in the middle of this booklet. Some of the more common effects of fatigue include:

- Difficulty doing the smallest chores. Even everyday activities such as brushing your hair, showering or cooking can seem impossible.
- A feeling of having no energy, as if you could spend the whole day in bed.
- A feeling of having no strength to do anything.
- A lack of concentration.
- Having trouble thinking, speaking or making decisions.
- Difficulty remembering things.
- Feeling breathless after only light activity.
- Dizziness or a feeling of light-headedness.
- Difficulty sleeping (insomnia).
- Losing interest in sex.
- Feeling more moody and emotional than usual.
Fatigue can affect the way you think and feel. You may find it impossible to concentrate on anything, which can affect studying or your job. Money may become a problem if you need to take time off work or stop working completely.

If you are having trouble concentrating, it can also affect things that you usually enjoy doing. Even reading or watching TV can be difficult.

Fatigue can affect your relationships. You may spend less time with friends and family, or spend more time sleeping. It may make you become impatient with people around you, or you may avoid going out or being with friends because it’s too much effort.

It is important to accept that this is happening to you. Getting help and support from your healthcare team may help to prevent or relieve some of these effects, and improve your quality of life. We hope the information in this booklet also helps you cope with the effects of fatigue.

You can watch Denton describe how he coped with fatigue during his treatment for prostate cancer in this video www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/tiredness
CAUSES OF FATIGUE

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Cancer treatments

Before treatment starts, many people already feel tired from the tests and investigations used to diagnose the cancer. The cancer itself can also make you feel tired. They may also be tired from trying to cope with different emotional effects. People who are older, have other medical problems, or have more than one type of treatment are more likely to be affected by cancer-related fatigue.

Surgery

Many people feel tired after surgery and need to take things easy for a while. This effect is usually temporary. However, some types of surgery may cause continuing problems with fatigue. For example, surgery to the stomach may lead to problems with absorbing food. If you are unable to absorb nutrients from food this can affect your energy levels.

Chemotherapy and radiotherapy

Chemotherapy is the use of anti-cancer (cytotoxic) drugs to destroy cancer cells. It is often given in cycles a few weeks apart. Some people feel most fatigued in the first few days after chemotherapy and then find it gets better until the next cycle. The fatigue may increase with each round of treatment.

Radiotherapy treats cancer by using high-energy rays to destroy cancer cells. Often people may feel increasingly fatigued as the treatment goes on.
Fatigue caused by chemotherapy or radiotherapy usually improves after treatment, but sometimes it can be more of a long-term problem.

Many people find their normal levels of energy return within 6–12 months of the treatment ending. However, some people find they still feel tired and have low energy levels a year or so later. Sometimes, tiredness can continue for two years or more, although this is far less common.

‘I felt pretty good when treatment ended, but then the fatigue gradually hit home after a couple of months. That was quite a surprise, I was having to haul myself about. I do still have quite a lot of fatigue, and not nearly as much stamina as before, but that does seem to be improving.’

Mary

Hormonal therapies

Hormonal therapies are treatments that can stop or slow the growth of some cancer cells. They either alter the levels of particular hormones in the body or prevent the hormones from being absorbed by cancer cells. These are often given for several years. Some hormonal therapies can cause fatigue.
Targeted (biological) therapies

Targeted therapies use substances that target the growth of cancer cells. Some of them can cause fatigue. Apart from treatment-related anaemia (see pages 15–16), doctors are still trying to find out exactly why cancer treatments cause fatigue. It’s thought that fatigue may occur after having cancer treatment because:

- the body needs extra energy to repair and heal
- there is a build-up of chemicals as the cancer cells are destroyed
- the body’s immune system is affected.
Anaemia

Anaemia is a possible cause of fatigue in people with cancer.

Anaemia is caused by not having enough **haemoglobin (Hb)** in the blood. Haemoglobin is found in red blood cells. It carries oxygen around the body. As red blood cells circulate in the body, they give energy by carrying oxygen to all of the body’s cells.

If the number of red blood cells is low, there is less Hb, so less oxygen reaches the cells. If the level of Hb in your blood drops below normal, you may feel tired and have less energy.

Doctors regularly check the levels of blood cells in people who have cancer and cancer treatments.

People who have anaemia may also find they:

- are breathless
- feel dizzy and light-headed
- have a worsening of angina (chest pain due to heart problems).
Coping with fatigue (tiredness)

Causes of anaemia

Chemotherapy reduces the production of red blood cells and is a common cause of anaemia.

Radiotherapy can also cause anaemia if it’s given to an area of the body that contains bone marrow. Red blood cells are made in the bone marrow. Radiotherapy given to the breastbone (sternum), the hip bones, or the long bones of the arms and legs is most likely to reduce the production of red blood cells.

If you are having cancer treatment, you may find it helpful to write down your Hb levels in the fatigue diary in the middle of this booklet. This may help you see how your Hb levels affect your everyday life and your level of fatigue. If you are anaemic, your doctor may be able to give you treatment that will make you feel better.

The treatment given for anaemia depends on the cause. The main treatment is a blood transfusion, which involves a drip (transfusion) of red blood cells given directly into the bloodstream. It can quickly raise the number of red blood cells that circulate in the body.

We can send you information about blood transfusions. Call us on 0808 808 00 00 to order it.
Eating problems

Our bodies get energy from the food we eat. Fatigue can occur if the body doesn’t get enough food or if there are changes to the way the body is able to use the food. In cancer, this can happen because:

• you can’t eat the same amount of food as you normally would
• your body needs more energy than it did before
• your body may not be able to absorb and use all the nutrients from the food.

Sometimes people may lose weight, regardless of the amount they eat, because of the effect of the cancer on the body.

If you feel sick (nausea), you may not get enough energy from food because its likely that you are eating less. If you actually are sick (vomit), your body doesn’t absorb the food and essential nutrients it needs. This can make you feel weak and tired, and you may also become dehydrated.

If you have nausea or vomiting, your doctor can prescribe anti-sickness (anti-emetic) drugs, which usually help. Try to take them regularly so that the sickness doesn’t come back. Some anti-sickness drugs can cause tiredness and may make you feel drowsy. However, it is important to keep taking them. Let your doctor know if this is a problem.
If you cannot take anti-sickness tablets or keep them down due to vomiting, speak to your doctor or nurse. There are other ways of taking anti-sickness medicines. Your healthcare team can discuss this with you.

Chemotherapy can cause changes in appetite and taste, which may cause you to eat less. If you find that some foods no longer appeal to you, try something different. Your doctor, nurse or hospital dietitian may be able to help.

It can help to get someone else to prepare food for you. Otherwise, you may find that you use all your energy to cook and then feel too tired to eat. You could also buy some ready-made meals or place an order with an organisation that delivers ready-made meals to your home.

You can also contact your council’s social services department to find out if you qualify for their ‘meals on wheels’ service.

You could try having small amounts of food or snacks often rather than a big meal. If you don’t feel like eating, you could try ready-made, high-calorie drinks. These are available from any chemist. Some are available on prescription. Unflavoured high-energy powders, which add calories to food without adding bulk, are also available on prescription.

Our booklet *Eating problems and cancer* has helpful tips.
Pain and other cancer symptoms

Many people with cancer don’t have pain, but for those who do, it can cause fatigue.

Painkillers and other treatments, such as relaxation and acupuncture, can help relieve pain and reduce fatigue.

We have a booklet called Controlling cancer pain, which discusses various ways of relieving pain.

Other symptoms such as breathlessness (shortness of breath) or fluid retention are also common causes of fatigue. If you have an infection or fever (high temperature), your body needs more energy and this may lead to fatigue. Treating the different symptoms that are causing your fatigue can often help to relieve it, so let your doctor or nurse know about any symptoms you have.

We have a booklet called Controlling the symptoms of cancer, which you might find helpful.
Cytokines

Cytokines are proteins produced by the body. They act as chemical messengers and help regulate a wide variety of functions in the body. Studies have shown that cytokine levels are often raised in people with cancer-related fatigue, and these high levels may actually cause some of the symptoms people have. However, the exact way cytokines cause fatigue is not yet fully understood.
Other medical problems

Other medical problems, for example, diabetes, heart problems or low thyroid function, may also make the symptoms of fatigue worse. These medical conditions may not have been obvious before the cancer was diagnosed, but they may come to light during or after cancer treatment.

Some medicines for conditions other than cancer can also make you feel tired.

‘The main thing that I suffer with on a daily basis is fatigue, which is a thing that I think people really find difficult to understand. If I tell someone I’m in pain they kind of accept it, but if I tell someone I’m tired they just think, “I’m what? I’m tired too”.’

Cat
Psychological effects of cancer

Anxiety, depression, stress and tension, as well as a poor sleeping pattern, can all contribute to fatigue. It’s common for people to have anxiety or depression when they’re first diagnosed with cancer. However, these feelings generally get easier to manage as you come to terms with what has happened.

You may find it helpful to discuss how you feel with your partner, a family member or close friend. Some people find it helpful to talk to other people at a local support group, or join an internet support group (see pages 26–27).

Macmillan’s Online Community (community.macmillan.org.uk) is a place you can talk to others who understand what you are going through.

If you find that your mood is low and continues to be low most of the time, you may have depression. If you have depression, your GP will discuss possible treatments with you. They can refer you to a counsellor (see page 44) and can prescribe medicines to help if necessary.

Our booklet How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer discusses ways of dealing with the emotions you may have.
TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR OR NURSE

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Getting support

It’s important to talk about your experience of fatigue with your healthcare team as there may be things that can be done to help you feel better.

Your doctor will check for any causes of fatigue that can be treated. They may examine you and may organise some blood tests.

It can sometimes be difficult for your healthcare team to understand how much fatigue is affecting your life and how distressing it is. You may need to emphasise the difficulties that fatigue is causing to your doctors and nurses.
Talking to your doctor or nurse

Tell them about the activities you find difficult, such as climbing stairs, cooking or bathing. Let them know if anything makes the fatigue better or worse. If you have kept a fatigue diary (there is one in the middle of this booklet), you can show it to the healthcare professionals looking after you.

It can often be difficult to discuss emotions, especially when you are ill, for fear of upsetting yourself and others. But it can really help to talk about your feelings with your doctors and nurses.

Here are some questions you may like to ask:

• What could be causing my fatigue?

• What treatments may help?

• How can I cope with my fatigue?

• What help is available?

• What can I do to help reduce my fatigue?

• What medicines am I taking that may affect my energy level?

• How much activity and exercise should I do?

There is space on page 89 for you to make a note of any questions you might want to ask, and the answers you receive.
Drug treatments for fatigue

At the moment, there aren’t any licensed drug treatments to help prevent or improve fatigue. Steroid drugs, such as dexamethasone, can sometimes be helpful. But they can have side effects, so you should discuss the possible benefits and disadvantages with your doctor.

Research into other drug treatments is ongoing. You may be asked to take part in a trial. Your doctor or specialist nurse can give you further information about any drug trials that may be suitable for you.

Our website has links to databases where you can search for clinical trials. Visit macmillan.org.uk/clinicaltrials
MANAGING YOUR FATIGUE

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Physical activity and exercise

There’s good evidence that physical activity, such as gentle strengthening exercises combined with some walking, can help to reduce the symptoms of fatigue. Being active may help to boost your appetite and give you more energy. It can also improve your general well-being, so it’s important to try to exercise a bit, even if you don’t feel like it. It’s best to try to get a good balance between being active, exercising and getting plenty of rest.

Before you start to do any physical activity or increase the amount you do, it’s important to get advice from a healthcare professional.

You may be a little bit nervous about getting started – that’s understandable. It’s best to choose an activity or exercise that you enjoy. Try to maintain the amount of activity you do.

However, if you have fatigue, this may not always be possible. Remember that some exercise is always better than no exercise. Simple goals, such as walking from the front door to the back door, may be an achievable goal for you. But try to increase your level of activity and build up the amount of exercise you do a bit at a time.

‘Exercise helps me deal with the fatigue. I experience a form of adrenaline rush which, I suppose, makes me feel wide awake.’

Jane
Your cancer specialist or GP can advise you on the type and amount of activity that’s safe for you. It’s also important to discuss any other medical conditions you have, such as high blood pressure, diabetes or lung problems, as these may be affected by physical activity.

‘Don’t stop moving. You will want to just drop, but you have to try and break through it. You might not feel like exercise. In fact, it can feel like the worst thing in the world, but then afterwards you will feel fantastic.’

Ross

You might find it helpful to get advice about exercise from a specialist cancer physiotherapist. Your GP or cancer specialist can arrange a referral for you. A physiotherapist can help you:

• build up your physical fitness
• improve your energy, strength, joint range, coordination and balance
• manage the side effects of treatment
• set some realistic goals for keeping active.

The physiotherapist may suggest referring you for a supervised group exercise programme. These groups are run by healthcare professionals or experienced fitness trainers. Many people find the social side of being in a group enjoyable, and it may also help give you a bit more motivation to exercise.
General suggestions for exercise

It’s helpful to set yourself some personal goals using the simple steps below. Try not to do too much, too soon.

• Plan some activity or light exercise into your day.

• Try some regular, light exercise, such as walking, and simple strengthening exercises like standing up and sitting down. These have been shown to reduce fatigue, and can help some people sleep better.

• Exercises such as yoga, qigong, pilates and tai chi may be particularly good, as they involve gentle movement, stretching, breathing and balance.

• Select exercise that you enjoy.

• If exercise is impossible, try to stay active in your daily routine.

• Pay attention to how your body reacts to activity and exercise. How did you feel? How well did you sleep afterwards?

• Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise.

• Keep a record of your activities so that you and your healthcare team can monitor your progress. You could write them down in the fatigue diary in the middle of this booklet.

• Allow your muscles time to recover after activity by balancing activity with rest.

• Don’t exercise if you feel unwell, are in pain or have any other symptoms that worry you, such as feeling breathless. Let your doctor know if you feel unwell or have worrying symptoms.
We can send you our **Move more** pack. This includes our booklet *Physical activity and cancer treatment* and our **Get active feel good DVD** if you’d like more information about exercise. We also have a video on our website about the benefits of being active. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/benefitsofbeingactive](http://macmillan.org.uk/benefitsofbeingactive)
Diet

Eating well and keeping to a healthy weight will help you maintain or regain your strength, have more energy and have an increased sense of well-being.

Here are some useful hints:

• Keep a diary of what and when you eat every day to see if you have more energy after certain meals.

• Try to take advantage of the times when your appetite is best.

• Drink plenty of fluids.

• If your taste changes, try different foods or eat the foods that taste best to you.

• Ask your doctor or nurse for any booklets or leaflets that give dietary advice.

• Ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian, who can give you helpful ideas.

Our booklets about diet and eating problems have helpful hints.
'Drink plenty of water and eat as regularly as possible. I found walking a good stress buster, it also helps with fatigue and low mood.'

Margaret
Sleep

It’s very important to try to keep to a normal sleep routine, even though your fatigue may make you feel like sleeping all the time.

There are many ways to overcome fatigue, which your nurse or doctor can discuss with you. In the meantime, the below tips for a better night’s sleep might help you to make the most of your rest periods.

Tips for a better night’s sleep

• Good-quality sleep is very important and may help to relieve fatigue, as well as reduce your need to sleep during the day.

• Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day. Having a long lie-in after a sleepless night can lead to a disrupted sleep pattern.

• Gentle exercise like walking and keeping your mind occupied with activities like reading, games or puzzles will help you feel naturally tired and ready for sleep.

• Get into a relaxing routine before bed. Try having a warm bath or shower, reading or listening to soothing music. Listening to an audio book or a relaxation exercise on CD, tape or MP3 player can also be helpful.

• Make your bedroom a relaxing place to be in. Create an area that’s dark, quiet and comfortable.

• Avoid large meals and stimulants like caffeine or cigarettes in the late evening. Try having a warm, milky drink before bed.
• Although a small alcoholic drink can help, too much alcohol can lead to disrupted sleep.

• Some medicines, for example, steroids, can cause sleeplessness. Ask your doctor or nurse whether you could take them earlier in the day. They may suggest you take them before 2pm.

• If you find it difficult to fall asleep or if you wake up during the night and can’t get back to sleep again, get up and go to another room. Do something else, like read or watch TV, until you feel tired again.

• If you find that worries or concerns are keeping you awake, write them down. You can then speak to someone about them later.

• Be aware of how naps affect you. Some people find that daytime naps help them sleep better at night, while others sleep less well after them.

• Consider a warm bath, with relaxing oils or burning of essential oils such as lavender in a diffuser.

You can get more information on sleeping well from the Royal College of Psychiatrists (rcpsych.ac.uk), which produces a range of useful information leaflets.
Mental exercises can also help you to sleep. Below are a few exercises that you may like to try. They usually take about 10 minutes to do.

- Try to remember the lines of a song or poem.
- Make alphabetical lists of girls’ or boys’ names, countries, trees or flowers.
- Relive in detail a favourite experience.
- Write a letter in your mind.
- Use a relaxation exercise (see the next page).

We can send you more information about difficulty sleeping. Call us on 0808 808 00 00 to order it.
Relaxation

Making time for activities that help you relax is very important in dealing with and preventing fatigue. Stress uses up energy and can make you feel more tired. It’s very likely that you will feel more stressed than usual when you start your cancer treatment.

The following suggestions may help you relax:

• Talk to others about anything that is worrying you.

• Try an activity such as reading, seeing friends and listening to music. This may help take your mind off worrying thoughts.

• If you can, try to avoid situations that make you anxious.

• If you can, take regular light exercise such as walking.

Many people find it hard to relax and unwind, especially if the stresses and strains of the day are difficult to forget. Using specific relaxation techniques can help to relieve tension and boost your energy levels.

‘I’ve just recently taken up adult colouring books. They are relaxing and a good diversion.’

Maggie
There are two types of relaxation exercises:

- **Physical exercises** work on tension in your body. These include tensing and releasing each part of your body in turn and breathing exercises.

- **Mental exercises** help to relax your mind. These include imagery exercises.

You may want to experiment until you find the best exercise for you. You can ask if there is a nurse or other healthcare professional, such as an occupational therapist or psychologist, who can help you find the technique that’s best for you.

Using relaxation CDs, podcasts or DVDs can be a good way to learn different exercises.

When you’re ready to try a relaxation exercise, find a quiet, warm, dimly lit, relaxing place where you won’t be disturbed, then lie or sit in a well-supported position. You’ll get the maximum benefit from these techniques if you practise them for 5–15 minutes each day.

There are instructions available on our website and on our CD called **Relax and breathe**. You may find some helpful techniques in tapes and CDs in your local library or you may want to try downloading relaxation podcasts from the internet.
Complementary therapies

There are a number of different complementary therapies that may help you cope with fatigue. They include:

- meditation
- acupuncture
- reflexology
- aromatherapy
- massage
- music therapy.

You may need to pay for these but they are sometimes available on the NHS. Your GP, specialist nurse or a palliative care nurse may be able to refer you. You may also be able to get them through a cancer support group.

Some doctors have been reluctant for their patients to use complementary therapies, mainly because they have not been properly tested in clinical trials. But many people who use them find that they’re relaxing and help improve their general well-being. They can also help you feel more in control of their health and of what’s happening to them.

We have a booklet called *Cancer and complementary therapies*, which has detailed information about various therapies and relaxation exercises.
Counselling

If you find it difficult to cope with your fatigue, or you feel anxious or depressed, you may find counselling helpful. Counsellors are trained to listen, and can help you talk through your feelings and find ways of dealing with them. They won’t give advice or answers, but will help you find your own answers. You may find counselling particularly helpful if you aren’t able to discuss your feelings and emotions with people close to you.

Many hospitals have counsellors or staff who are specially trained to provide emotional support and counselling. You can ask your hospital doctor or nurse what services are available and ask them to refer you. Some GPs have counsellors in their practice, or they can refer you to one.

If you would like to find out more about counselling, you can call our cancer support specialists on 0808 808 00 00. They can tell you more and let you know about services in your area. Not all counselling services are available on the NHS, so you may need to pay for them.

‘I always had a huge amount of energy but am finding I have very little. I think you just have to accept that you have less energy than before and work around that. You have been through an awful lot. I have to plan things so I don’t do too much at once.’

Grace
Support

Some people find it helps to talk to other people who have had fatigue. You may find talking to other people at the hospital helpful, or you could join a local support group, or share your experiences with others online.

Support groups

Most areas in the UK have cancer support groups. They are sometimes led by a healthcare professional. Other members of the group may be in a similar position to you. Some support groups have counsellors.

Some people find groups helpful and they form close relationships with other members. However, other people get embarrassed or uncomfortable when talking about personal issues with strangers. Don’t worry if groups aren’t for you.

Our cancer support specialists on 0808 808 00 00 can let you know about support groups in your area or you can find them at macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups
‘I realised fairly quickly that the more I was doing nothing, the more tired and fatigued I was feeling. I'd end up feeling sorry for myself – it was a vicious circle.’

Jane
How to use your fatigue diary

Keeping a daily diary of your energy levels and when you have treatment can help you work out how treatment affects you.

You can use this fatigue diary to record how you feel at different times. You can also use the diary to record your activity. This will help you to keep track of what you do and help you monitor your progress.

You may want to photocopy this diary before you use it so that you have more than one copy to use in the future.

You can also download and print off a blank diary from macmillan.org.uk/fatigue
Fatigue diary

Each morning and afternoon, put a cross in the box that relates to your energy level on this scale of 1–6:

1 No fatigue.
2 Mild fatigue – but able to do normal activities.
3 Some fatigue – able to do most activities.
4 Moderate fatigue – able to do some activities, but need rest.
5 Severe fatigue – difficulty walking or doing home activities such as cooking or shopping.
6 Extreme fatigue – needing to sleep or rest all day.

Put a cross in the boxes on the days you have treatment (chemotherapy, radiotherapy, hormonal therapy or any other type of treatment). This can show you how treatment affects your energy levels.

Write your haemoglobin (Hb) level in the line marked ‘Haemoglobin’. When you’re having cancer treatment, the doctors will be checking this regularly and can tell you what your level is.

You can measure your Hb and energy levels in this way and share the information with the health professionals looking after you. They will be able to offer you more effective treatment for fatigue based on your notes.
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Online support

You may find it helps to join an online support group or chat room. There are a number of online groups for various cancers, where you can chat to other people. If you prefer, you can stay anonymous and just read other people’s posts. Online groups and chat rooms can be very supportive, as you’ll find that other people have similar thoughts, emotions and experiences to you.

The groups and chat rooms are often available 24 hours a day. So there may be people online to chat to when you really need support the most. Online groups are easy to join and leave, without any need for personal contact or explanations.

Our online community at macmillan.org.uk/community is a site where you can chat to people in our forums, blog about your experiences, make friends and join support groups. You can share your thoughts and feelings and get support from others.

Spiritual support

Some people find comfort in religion during times when they feel anxious or depressed. You may find it helpful to talk to a local minister, hospital chaplain or other spiritual or religious adviser. Don’t be put off if you’ve never talked to one before, or if you don’t have any particular faith. They are used to supporting people in times of need.

Our booklet How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer discusses ways of dealing with the emotions you may have.
# Managing Day-to-Day Life with Fatigue

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Planning

If you have fatigue, planning ahead is important. Plan your day so that you have time to do the things you want to do most. It’s important to be realistic about what you can do.

You can use the fatigue diary in the centre of this booklet to write down the times when you feel your best and when you feel most tired. This may help you to plan your activities.

Keeping a note of your energy levels will help you identify the days and times when you have more energy. However, you may not be able to do everything you used to do.

It may help to decide early on which activities you are prepared to give up, at least until you feel more able to do them again.

Some people may find it helpful to think of their energy stores as an energy ‘bank’. With rests as ‘deposits’ and jobs and activities as ‘withdrawals’ made during the day. This helps to ensure a balance of conserving and restoring energy against using it.

While some people feel less tired in the mornings, others cope better in the afternoon. Try to plan bigger tasks to fit in with the time of day when you feel least tired. Pace yourself, and plan enough rest and sleep periods. It makes sense to plan a period of rest after a period of activity. Some people also find that they need to rest after meals.

Short naps and rest periods can help, however, you need to balance them with some activity or exercise. Too much rest isn’t always a good thing as your muscles can weaken, which can make your fatigue worse. It’s important that any daytime rest doesn’t stop you from sleeping at night.
It’s also important to plan your days around your treatment. Try to avoid anything energetic or stressful for 24 hours before and after your treatments. If you feel less well on a particular day, it’s okay to be less active and to rest more.

Doing things for yourself can be very important, however it is also okay to ask other people to help. Often friends and relatives want to help and are pleased to be asked.

You may also find it helpful to see an occupational therapist from the hospital or from social services. They can help you find ways of saving your energy and may be able to visit you at home.
Coping with fatigue at home

Managing day-to-day activities

You may find that some of the following suggestions help you deal with everyday tasks. Remember that family, friends, neighbours and social workers can all help you with your everyday activities. Often they will be glad to help with practical chores.

Housekeeping

- Spread tasks out over the week.
- Do a little bit each day rather than a lot in one go.
- Ask other people to do heavy work where possible.
- Sit down to do chores whenever you can.
- If you can afford it, employ a cleaner. If not, you can ask for home help from social services. Depending on your circumstances, you may need to pay for this.
- To avoid stretching and bending, use long-handed dusters, mops and dustpans where possible.
- Ask someone to take your rubbish bags out for you.
- Ask someone to cut your grass and tidy the garden for you.
Shopping
Ask others to do your shopping for you. If you don’t have anyone who can do it for you, or you would rather shop yourself, these suggestions may help:

• Make a list before you start.

• Write the shopping list following the layout of the store, so you don’t walk around more than necessary.

• Use a shopping trolley for support.

• Use a wheeled shopping bag to carry supplies and shopping.

• Shop at less busy times.

• Ask for help in the shop/supermarket with packing and carrying groceries to the car, or ask them to deliver them to your home.

• Shop with a friend for extra help.

• Do your shopping online and have it delivered at a time that suits you.

‘I have found the best way to deal with it is by pacing and delegating. You do things little and often. Your fatigue will fluctuate from day to day, so don’t get angry with yourself if you managed more the previous day.’

Sarah
Meal preparation

- Try cooking simpler meals to reduce the amount of time you spend in the kitchen.
- Eat convenience/precooked meals.
- Try eating little and often. Eat small meals and snacks throughout the day.
- If you can, sit while preparing meals.
- Prepare extra dishes or double portions when you’re feeling less tired and freeze them for when you need them.
- Use oven dishes you can serve from to save on washing up.
- Don’t lift heavy pans. Where possible, dish food out near the stove.
- Ask others to move heavy items to the table.
- Avoid bending and stretching when preparing food.
- Let dishes soak rather than scrubbing them, and leave them to dry on a draining board.
- Use a dishwasher if you have one.
- Use place mats instead of tablecloths – they’re easier to put on the table and to clean.
Washing and dressing
- Have a bath rather than a shower, or sit down in the shower.
- Wear clothes that are easy to put on and take off. Sometimes wearing pyjamas is easier if you’re not going out.
- Sit down when getting dressed.
- Consider wearing a towelling dressing gown after a shower or bath. This uses up less energy than drying yourself with a towel.

Leisure
- Listen to audiobooks if you feel too tired to read.
- Listen to the radio or podcasts rather than watching TV.
- Explain to family and friends that there may be times when you can’t see them, or that short phone calls and visits may be better.

Laundry
- Where possible, use a trolley to move your washing to and from the washing machine.
- Get help to hang up washing.
- Use a foldaway drying rack for smaller items.
- Use a lightweight iron and sit down to iron if you can.
- Wear clothes that don’t need to be ironed.
- Slide the iron on to a heatproof pad to avoid lifting it.
Childcare
For some people it can be difficult looking after a family while coping with fatigue. This can be especially upsetting when you have children and you’re unable to do your usual family activities. However, there are things that you can do to make things a bit easier:

• Start by explaining to your child(ren) that you’re feeling tired and won’t be able to do as much with them as before. You may be surprised at how well they respond.

• Plan activities with your children that can be done while sitting down. For example, reading a book or watching a movie.

• Try planning activities where there are places for you to sit while the children enjoy themselves.

• Try to avoid lifting smaller children. Use a pram or pushchair if you have to transport them from place to place.

• Try to involve your children in some household chores.

• Accept offers of help from people you trust. This may include someone else taking your children to and from school or looking after them occasionally.

• Ask people to babysit from time to time so you can do some of the things you enjoy doing or need to do.
Driving

Driving can be difficult and dangerous if you feel very tired.

You may be less alert than normal, and less able to concentrate. Your reaction time will also be reduced. You might find the following tips helpful:

• If you feel very tired it may be better to avoid driving.

• If possible, ask a family member or friend to drive you.

• If you have to get to hospital appointments, ask your nurse or doctor if there is any help available so that you don’t have to drive.

• If you have to drive, plan any trips for when you know you usually feel more alert. It may also help to avoid driving at times when the roads are busier than usual.

• If you have to make a long journey, plan to break it up with regular stops or an overnight stay somewhere.

• If you feel yourself falling asleep while driving, stop in a safe place and take a break.

‘I find that spacing out what I do during the day helps with the tiredness. Remember that your body has gone through an awful lot, so try not to do too much.’

Julie
Coping with fatigue at work

You may find that you can’t continue working due to your fatigue, or that you have to reduce the amount of time you spend at work. It can help to talk to your employer or personnel/human resources (HR) department and let them know that you may need some time off.

If you carry on working, you may be able to find ways of making your work less tiring for a while.
Anyone with cancer is protected by the **Equality Act 2010**, which prevents employers from victimising or discriminating against people with a disability. The act also states that employers are expected to make reasonable adjustments to support employees in the workplace. You may want to make suggestions for adjustments that could help to support you.

Things that your employer can do to help include:

- changing your hours so that you can travel to and from work at less busy times (outside the rush hour)
- asking colleagues to be supportive and to help with some of your work
- finding you a parking place near to your place of work
- letting you take short breaks to lie down and rest
- allowing you to work from home (if this is possible)
- finding you lighter work if your job involves physical exertion or heavy lifting.

If you’re self-employed, it can help to visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) to see what benefits you may be entitled to claim.

**Our booklets Work and cancer and Self-employment and cancer** have more detailed information and useful tips for coping with fatigue at work.
LOOKING AFTER SOMEONE WHO HAS FATIGUE

Caring for someone with fatigue
Caring for someone with fatigue

If you’re caring for someone with fatigue, there are a number of simple things that you can do to help:

• Acknowledge that fatigue is a difficult problem to deal with. This can be reassuring for your friend or relative.

• Understand the different ways of dealing with fatigue. Reading the information in this booklet should help.

• Encourage your relative or friend to use the fatigue diary in the centre of this booklet, or help them to fill it in. Write down how fatigue affects their life, as well as how it affects yours.

• Use the fatigue diary to find out what times the person you care for has more energy to do things, such as shopping or having visitors around. Plan to make the most of these times.

• Try reducing fatigue by helping your relative or friend make simple improvements to their sleep, diet and exercise habits (see pages 32–45).
Looking after someone who has fatigue

You can go with your relative or friend on their visits to hospital and take the fatigue diary with you. Discuss the following points with the doctors and nurses:

• How the fatigue is affecting both of you.

• What could be causing the fatigue.

• What techniques you’ve tried to reduce fatigue and what has or hasn’t been helpful.

• Other ways the doctors may be able to treat the fatigue.

Caring for another person can be exhausting. You may also become tired if you have lots to worry about. It’s important that you also look after yourself and avoid getting too tired.

This can be difficult when you have a lot to do and you don’t want to let your relative or friend down.

You may need to involve other people or organisations (see pages 83–88) to help with the caring, especially if you also have an illness that makes you feel tired.

You may find it helpful to read our booklet Hello, and how are you? which was written by carers, for carers. We also have a booklet called Let’s talk about you, which gives advice for young carers. You might also like to read Working while caring for someone with cancer.
WORK AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial help and benefits
Financial help and benefits

If you are struggling to cope with the financial effects of cancer, help is available.

If you cannot work because you are ill, you may be able to get **Statutory Sick Pay**. Your employer will pay this for up to 28 weeks of sickness. If you qualify for it, they cannot pay you less.

Before your Statutory Sick Pay ends, or if you do not qualify for it, check whether you can get **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**. This benefit is for people who cannot work because they are ill or disabled.

There are two different types of ESA:

- **contributory** – you can get this if you have made enough national insurance contributions

- **income-related** – you can get this if your income and savings are below a certain level.

Since October 2013, a new benefit called **Universal Credit** has started replacing income-related ESA in England, Scotland and Wales. This benefit is for people who are looking for work or on a low income.
Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a new benefit for people under 65 who find it difficult to walk or look after themselves (or both). You must have had these difficulties for at least three months, and they should be expected to last for the next nine months. Since April 2013, PIP has started to replace a similar older benefit called Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in England, Scotland and Wales.

Attendance Allowance (AA) is for people aged 65 or over who find it difficult to look after themselves. You may qualify if you need help with things like getting out of bed, having a bath or dressing yourself. You don’t need to have a carer, but you must have needed care for at least six months.

If you are terminally ill, you can apply for PIP, DLA or AA under the ‘special rules’. This means your claim will be dealt with quickly and you will get the benefit you applied for at the highest rate.

Help for carers

Carer’s Allowance is a weekly benefit that helps people who look after someone with a lot of care needs. If you don’t qualify for it, you can apply for Carer’s Credit. This helps you to build up qualifying years for a State Pension.
More information

The benefits system can be hard to understand, so it’s a good idea to talk to an experienced welfare rights adviser. You can speak to one by calling the Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 00 00. We’ve just listed some benefits here, but there may be others you can get.

You can find out about state benefits and apply for them online at gov.uk (England, Wales and Scotland) and nidirect.gov.uk (Northern Ireland). These websites have information about financial support, your rights, employment and independent living. You can also get information about these issues from the relevant Department for Work and Pensions helplines (see page 86) or Citizens Advice (see page 86). In Northern Ireland, you can call the Benefit Enquiry Line Northern Ireland on 0800 220 674.

Our booklet Help with the cost of cancer has more detailed information. You might also find our video at macmillan.org.uk/gettingfinancialhelp useful.

Insurance

People who have, or have had, cancer may find it hard to get certain types of insurance, including life and travel insurance. A financial adviser can help you look at your needs and find the best deal for you. You can find a financial adviser by contacting one of the organisations on page 86.

Our booklets Insurance and Getting travel insurance may also be helpful.
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 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 advice
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.

Complementary health organisations

**British Acupuncture Council**
63 Jeddo Road,
London W12 9HQ
**Tel** 020 8735 0400
**www.acupuncture.org.uk**
Regulatory body for the practice of traditional acupuncture. You can download a list of practitioners from the website.

**The British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA)**
PO Box 5122,
Bournemouth BH8 0WG
**Tel** 0845 345 5977
**Email** office@bcma.co.uk
**www.bcma.co.uk**
An umbrella organisation of complementary medicine therapists. All listed therapists and organisations are members of the BCMA and must meet its code of ethics.

**British Holistic Medical Association**
West Barn,
Chewton Keynsham,
Bristol BS31 2SR
**www.bhma.org**
An organisation of health professionals, complementary and alternative medicine practitioners, and members of the public who want to adopt a more holistic approach to their lives. Produces self-help books and CDs.

**British Reflexology Association**
Monks Orchard, Whitbourne,
Worcester WR6 5RB
**Tel** 01886 821 207
**Email** bra@britreflex.co.uk
**www.britreflex.co.uk**
The representative body for reflexology practitioners. You can search for practitioners on the website. Also sells books and DVDs about reflexology.
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.cancersupportscotland.org**  
Runs cancer support groups throughout Scotland. Also offers free complementary therapies and counselling to anyone affected by cancer.

**Maggie’s Centres**  
20 St. James Street,  
London W6 9RW  
**Tel** 0300 123 1801  
**www.maggiescentres.org**  
Provides information about cancer, benefits advice, and emotional or psychological support.
Tenovus
Head Office,
Gleider House,
Ty Glas Road,
Cardiff CF14 5BD
Helpline 0808 808 1010
(Mon–Sun, 8am–8pm)
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.

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.

Financial or legal advice and information

Benefit Enquiry Line
Northern Ireland
Helpline 0800 220 674
(Mon–Wed and Fri, 9am–5pm, Thu, 10am–5pm)
Textphone 028 9031 1092
www.nidirect.gov.uk/money-tax-and-benefits
Provides information and advice about disability benefits and carers’ benefits.
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 these 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

GOV.UK
www.gov.uk
Has comprehensive information about social security benefits and public services.

Personal Finance Society – ‘Find an Adviser’ service
www.findanadviser.org
Use the website to find qualified financial advisers in your area.

Unbiased.co.uk
Email contact@unbiased.co.uk
www.unbiased.co.uk
On the website you can search for qualified advisers who specialise in giving financial advice, mortgage, accounting or legal advice.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Disability Living Allowance
Helpline 0345 712 3456
Textphone 0345 722 4433
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

Equipment and advice on living with a disability

British Red Cross
UK Office, 44 Moorfields,
London EC2Y 9AL
Tel 0344 871 11 11
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.
Disability Rights UK
Ground Floor,
CAN Mezzanine,
49–51 East Road,
London N1 6AH
Tel 0207 250 8181
(Mon–Fri, 10–12.30pm
and 1.30–4pm)
www.disabilityrightsuk.org.uk
Provides information on
social security benefits
and disability rights.
Has a number of helplines
for specific support, including
information on returning to
work, direct payments, human
rights issues, and advice for
disabled students.

Scope
6 Market Road,
London N7 9PW
Helpline 0808 800 3333
(Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)
www.scope.org.uk
Offers confidential advice
and information on living
with disability. Also supports
an independent, UK-wide
network of local Disability
Information and Advice Line
services (DIALs) run by
and for disabled people.

Support for young people

CLIC Sargent
Horatio House,
77–85 Fulham Palace Road,
London W6 8JA
Tel 0300 330 0803
www.clicsargent.org.uk
Provides clinical, practical,
financial and emotional support
to children with cancer.

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

Age UK
Tavis House,
1–6 Tavistock Square,
London WC1H 9NA
Helpline (England and Wales) 0800 169 6565
Helpline (Scotland) 0800 470 8090
Helpline (Northern Ireland) 0808 808 7575
(Daily, 8am–7pm)
www.ageuk.org.uk
Provides information and advice for older people across the UK via the website and advice line. Also publishes impartial and informative fact sheets and advice guides.

Support for carers

Carers UK
Helpline (England, Scotland, Wales) 0808 808 7777
(Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm)
Tel (Northern Ireland) 028 9043 9843
Email advice@carersuk.org
www.carersuk.org
Offers information and support to carers across the UK. Can put people in contact with support groups for carers in their area.
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 Tim Iveson, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Macmillan Chief Medical Editor. With thanks to: Suzy Bridger, Macmillan Palliative Care CNS; Dr Jackie Gracey, Lecturer in Physiotherapy and Dr Oliver Minton, Honorary Consultant in Palliative Medicine. 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
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Email

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I enclose a cheque / postal order / Charity Voucher made payable to Macmillan Cancer Support

OR debit my:
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Expiry date

Issue no

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Date / / 

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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
