

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

THE BUILDING-UP DIET



About this booklet

This booklet is for people who may be finding it difficult to maintain their weight. It explains the different food types and has suggestions on how to get more energy and protein in your diet. It also includes some meal ideas and a suggested shopping list of items that may help you when preparing meals.

This booklet is part of a series of booklets on diet and cancer. The other booklets in the series are **Recipes for people affected by cancer**, **Eating problems and cancer** and **Healthy eating and cancer**. Check with your cancer doctor, nurse or dietitian that this is the right booklet for you, and whether you need any additional information.

How to use this booklet

The booklet is split into sections to help you find what you need. You don't have to read it from start to finish. You can use the contents list on page 3 to help you.

At the end of this booklet there are some useful organisations and websites (see pages 51 to 55). On pages 56 to 57 there is space for you to write down questions for your doctor, nurse or dietitian. If you find this booklet helpful, you could pass it on to your family and friends. They may also want information to help support you.

For more information

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, or visit **macmillan.org.uk**

If you would prefer to speak to us in another language, interpreters are available. Please tell us, in English, the language you want to use.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call us using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app.

We have some information in different languages and formats, including audio, eBooks, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these visit **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats** or call **0808 808 00 00**.

We have included quotes from people who have had difficulty maintaining their weight, which you may find helpful. Some are from people who have chosen to share their stories with us. Others are from members of our Online Community (**macmillan.org.uk/community**).

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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. You can find more information at [macmillan.org.uk/cancerregistry](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancerregistry)



HOW THE BUILDING-UP DIET CAN HELP

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Changes to your appetite and weight

Many people with cancer find there are times when they can't eat as much as usual. Sometimes this leads to weight loss.

There are lots of reasons for this. It can be related to the cancer itself, or to the side effects of different treatments. Some people do not feel hungry, or feel full soon after starting a meal. Others find that food makes them feel sick (nauseous), or that their treatment makes some foods taste different.

Some types of cancer make your body use up more energy, even if you are not very active. The cancer may produce chemicals that make your body work more quickly than normal. It may also produce chemicals that make your body break down fat and protein more quickly. This can make you lose weight, even though you may still be eating well. If you lose too much weight, it is important to talk to a dietitian. They can suggest changes to your diet. They may suggest using nutritional supplements to help prevent further weight loss and help you gain weight.

'I've never had a big appetite. It was all the more difficult when I was told that I should be consuming up to 3,000 calories a day to keep my weight up, because chemo often took away my appetite.'

Conor

Know your food types

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre.

Starchy foods (carbohydrates)

Starchy foods (carbohydrates) are an important part of a healthy diet. They are a good source of energy and contain nutrients, including fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins.

Starchy foods are broken down in the body to become glucose, which gives us energy. Energy is measured in calories. We all need a certain number of calories each day for energy, even if we are not being very active. For example, we need energy to breathe when just sitting in a chair.

The amount of energy a person needs each day varies. It depends on how quickly their body uses the energy, and on their level of activity. An adult man needs about 2,500 calories a day and an adult woman needs about 2,000 calories. If we have too many calories, we put on weight. If we do not have enough, we use up our body's energy stores and lose weight.

Fibre (roughage)

The main role of fibre is to keep the digestive system and bowels healthy and prevent constipation. Fibre is the part of cereals, fruits and vegetables that is not digested and passes down into the gut.

Sugar

Sugar is a good source of energy and is found naturally in some food and drinks, such as fruit and milk. The body also gets glucose (a type of sugar needed for energy) by breaking down carbohydrates.

Fats

Having some fat in our diet helps us to absorb vitamins A, D, E and K. Foods that are high in fat are also high in energy (calories). This means eating a lot of fat can make you more likely to put on weight and develop other health problems.

There are two types of fat:

- **Saturated fats** are found mainly in fatty cuts of meat, sausages, pies, butter, ghee, cheese, cakes and biscuits.
- **Unsaturated fats** are found mainly in vegetable-based cooking oils and spreads, nuts, seeds and oily fish such as sardines and mackerel. Unsaturated fats are still high-energy (high-calorie) foods.

Generally, it is important to try to eat less fat, and to choose foods that contain unsaturated fats instead of saturated. Even foods labelled as 'low fat' can still be high in calories. However, if you are trying to gain weight, you may need to have more fat in your diet.

Protein

Your body needs protein to perform a wide range of functions, such as building and repairing muscles and other body tissues. We need extra protein (as well as extra energy) when we are ill, injured or stressed, to repair any damage. Protein-rich foods can also be a good source of vitamins and minerals. Protein is found in red meat, poultry (such as chicken and turkey), fish, milk, dairy foods, eggs and pulses (such as peas, beans and lentils). It can also be found in soya, tofu and mycoprotein (Quorn™), which can replace mince, burgers and sausages as a source of protein.



The building-up diet

People who find it difficult to eat enough, especially if they are losing weight, need to find ways to get more energy and protein in their diet.

The building-up diet is high in energy and protein. It is specifically for people who have lost or are losing weight, or who can only manage to eat small amounts. Not everyone will be able to put on weight with this diet, but it should help to slow down or stop further weight loss.

Your doctor or dietitian may recommend foods that you would normally think of as unhealthy. If you do not have a dietitian, you can ask your specialist doctor, nurse or GP to refer you to one. Qualified dietitians are experts in assessing the nutritional needs of people who are ill. They can review your diet and consider any specialist dietary needs you may have, such as food intolerances or allergies. They can give you advice about which foods are best for you and whether any food (nutritional) supplements may be helpful.

'I made healthy food with protein, veg and rice but put extra butter, olive oil and full-fat milk in, to give it extra calories.'

Anna



'I was most worried about weight loss. In the beginning of my treatment, I lost around 6kg within a very short time. I was already quite skinny to begin with.'

Conor

Try to keep active

It is important to try to keep active, even if you are losing some weight. Without some form of activity, our muscles can get weak quickly. Activity should be done at your own pace. Gentle exercise, such as going for a short walk, may be all you need. Your doctor, nurse or physiotherapist can advise you on how much and which type of exercise would be helpful for you.

We have information on keeping active during cancer treatment in our pack **Move more: your guide to becoming more active**. To order a free copy, visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.



Adding energy and protein to everyday foods

If you have a good appetite, you should not have trouble eating the extra calories and protein that you may need if you are ill. If you do not have a good appetite, there are ways to add extra energy and protein to your diet without having to eat more food.

Talk to your doctor, specialist nurse or a dietitian if you are still struggling. They may encourage you to eat everyday foods that are high in energy and protein. They can also recommend or prescribe manufactured food (nutritional) supplements, which can come in forms such as milkshakes and juices. There is more information about these on pages 17 to 20.

Your doctor at the hospital can refer you to a dietitian. In some hospitals, you can refer yourself. You can contact the hospital's dietetic department for more information. If you are not in hospital, your GP can refer you to a community dietitian, who may be able to visit you at home. They may also be able to see you at your local GP surgery or health centre.

If you have any dietary limitations, for example, lactose intolerance or diabetes, it is important to talk to a dietitian, GP or specialist doctor at the hospital for advice. We have more information about diabetes in our booklet **Diabetes and cancer treatment**. To order it, call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Fortified milk

Adding extra energy and protein to your diet without having to eat more is called fortifying your food. You can make fortified milk by adding 2 to 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder to a pint (570ml) of full-fat milk and mixing it together. Keep it in the fridge and use it in drinks, on cereals and for cooking. Use fortified milk or milk-based supplements instead of water to make soups, jellies, custards and puddings. Many producers of nutritional supplements can give you recipes that use their products. Read the packet or visit the website for details.

Cereals and porridge

Pour fortified milk or a milk-based supplement over your cereal. Make porridge with full-fat milk or cream. Add golden syrup, maple syrup, honey or sugar to your cereal or porridge. Try adding stewed or dried fruit too.

Casseroles and soups

Add lentils, beans or noodles to casseroles and soups. Stir a tablespoon of cream into canned soups, or add energy and protein supplements. Grate some cheese over the heated soup, or drizzle some olive oil over the top. Try making packet soups using fortified milk.

Mashed potato

Add butter or cream to mashed potato, and sprinkle grated cheese on top.

Vitamins and minerals

The body needs minerals for various functions, such as maintaining healthy nerves, bones and teeth. Vitamins are essential to help our bodies work normally, but we only need tiny amounts of them. If you are eating even a small amount of the main food types that contain vitamins, you are probably getting enough vitamins. But if you are not able to eat well for a long period of time, you may need multivitamins and mineral supplements. Your doctor, dietitian or pharmacist can give you more advice about these.

Fluids

Our bodies need a certain amount of fluid each day to work properly. It may be difficult to drink enough liquid when you don't feel well. Women should try to drink roughly 8 glasses (about 1.6 litres) of fluid a day, and men should try to drink about 10 glasses (about 2 litres) a day.

Water is the best for hydration, but it contains no extra nutrients such as energy or vitamins. Milk, smoothies and not-from-concentrate or freshly-squeezed fruit juices contain a lot of energy and nutrients, so they may be good choices if you are struggling to eat well. Soft and fizzy drinks that contain a lot of sugar are high in energy, but they do not contain any other nutrients. The sugar and acidity may also harm your teeth.

Drinks that contain caffeine include coffee, tea and some fizzy drinks. These can make you need to pass urine more often. You can include them as part of your normal fluid intake. But make sure that you drink other fluids that do not contain caffeine as well.

Vegetables

Melt butter on hot vegetables and top with grated cheese or a chopped, hard-boiled egg. Or add a sauce made with fortified milk or cream.

Sandwiches

Use plenty of butter or spread. Add a dessert spoon of mayonnaise or salad cream to thick sandwich fillings such as tuna, chicken, egg or cheese.

Below are some tips to add energy and protein to meals:

- When you are shopping, choose full-fat foods instead of 'diet' or 'light' foods.
- Fry your foods in oil, ghee or butter.
- Add extra butter, margarine or oil to bread, potatoes, pasta and cooked vegetables.
- Add extra cheese to sauces and extra paneer to curries.
- Add cream, sour cream, plain yoghurt, mascarpone or crème fraiche to sauces, soups and meat dishes.
- Add whole or blended beans, lentils or peas to curries and stews.
- Add evaporated milk, condensed milk or cream to desserts and hot drinks.
- Have cream or ice-cream with desserts.
- Add peanut butter (or other nut spreads), chocolate spread, tahini, honey or jam to bread, toast, crackers and biscuits.

Manufactured food (nutritional) supplements

The best way to get more energy and protein into your diet is by eating a healthy, balanced diet. If you are still having eating problems or are continuing to lose weight, talk to your specialist doctor, nurse or GP. They can give you more advice.

There are many nutritional supplements available, which can add extra energy or protein (or both) to your diet. You can add them to your everyday foods, or they can be an addition to your normal diet. Sometimes they can be used to replace meals.

The types of nutritional supplements available include:

- milk-based supplements
- juice-tasting supplements
- soups
- powdered drinks
- ready-made puddings
- concentrated liquids.

They come in many different flavours. If you have a dairy (lactose) intolerance, ask your GP, specialist nurse or dietitian to prescribe dairy-free food supplements.

You can get some of these products from your chemist or supermarket, but your doctor, nurse or dietitian will need to prescribe some of them for you. High-protein or high-energy supplements should only be used with advice from your doctor or dietitian.

If you are diabetic, it is important to get advice from your GP, specialist nurse or dietitian before using nutritional supplements.

Powdered drinks

Some powdered drink supplements can be used to replace a meal. You can mix them with fortified milk or water. Some can be prescribed by your doctor. You can buy some products from your chemist and some supermarkets.

'The dietetics team advised me to use Complian[®] in milk. This gave me the confidence to try other new things because I knew that if they didn't work, then I was still getting the nutrients from the Complian.'

Joshua

Milk-based supplements

These are available on prescription in a variety of flavours, including sweet, savoury and neutral. The supplements usually need to be used within 24 hours. If you can only manage small amounts at a time, you can pour some into a glass and keep the rest in the fridge. We have ideas about how to include these in your everyday diet on page 15.

Juice-tasting supplements

These ready-made, flavoured supplements are available on prescription.

High-energy and juice-tasting supplements have a high sugar content. If you are diabetic, talk to your dietitian before using them. These drinks may not be suitable if you have a sore mouth or throat, as they may sting.

If you have had radiotherapy for certain types of head and neck cancer, you may be more at risk of tooth decay, so it is best to avoid having sugar too often.

It is a good idea to clean your teeth or use a mouthwash after any sugary snacks and make sure you have your teeth regularly checked by a dentist. Your GP, nurse or dietitian can give you more advice about this.

We can send you more information about the effects of head and neck cancer treatment. Call us on **0808 808 00 00** or visit **be.macmillan.org.uk**

Fat-based liquids

You can take these supplements separately in small doses, or you can add them to some foods. Your doctor or dietitian will give you advice on how and when you should use this type of supplement.

Energy and protein powders

Unflavoured powders are also available on prescription from your GP or dietitian. These are almost tasteless, so you can add them to:

- drinks
- soups
- sauces
- gravies
- casseroles
- flan fillings
- milk puddings
- instant desserts.

Your GP or dietitian can explain how much powder to use in different meals or drinks.





PLANNING YOUR MEALS

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Shopping list

On pages 25 to 26 there is a list of items you might want to stock up on, so you will have some foods high in energy and protein easily available. We have listed foods that are longer lasting, but you will still need to shop for fresh fruits and vegetables. If you are a meat-eater, you will need to buy fresh or frozen meat and fish.



For the cupboard

You might want to buy:

- porridge or oatmeal
- sugar, maple syrup, golden syrup or honey
- bread, paratha, chapatis, naan, pitta, muffins, crumpets or tortillas
- biscuits
- crackers
- nuts, seeds, Sev or Bombay mix
- evaporated milk or dried milk powder
- drinking chocolate or malted drinks
- fresh, dried, tinned or stewed fruit
- tinned vegetables
- peanut butter, jam or marmalade
- jelly
- puddings, such as powdered or ready-made custard and mousse, instant-whip desserts or rice pudding
- oil or ghee
- gravy
- mayonnaise or salad cream
- tins, cartons or packets of soup
- tins of fish, such as mackerel or sardines.

For the fridge

You might want to buy:

- full-fat milk, rice milk or soya milk
- cream or crème fraîche
- butter or margarine
- pasteurised cheese
- eggs
- full-fat houmous
- full-fat yoghurt, fromage frais or lassi
- ready-made smoothies
- ready-made puddings, for example trifle, crème caramel, fruit crumble or steamed puddings.

For the freezer

You might want to buy:

- ice-cream, ice-lollies or sorbet
- kulfi
- frozen ready meals
- frozen fruit, such as raspberries, mango or blueberries
- frozen vegetables, such as peas or vegetable mixes.

You can also grate cheese and freeze it.

Meal ideas

We have suggested some ideas for breakfast, lunch, dinner and pudding. They show you how you can boost your protein and energy intake without having to eat more food. These are only suggestions, but we hope they give you some ideas for ways to adapt your usual meals.

Between meals, you can keep up your energy intake with nourishing snacks and drinks.

We have recipes for people affected by cancer with more suggestions of meals suitable for people with weight loss. The recipes have information about how much protein and energy is in each meal. To order a copy of our booklet **Recipes for people affected by cancer**, call **0808 808 00 00**.

'Soups were a very good source of calories and nourishment and can be varied by using different ingredients and blending finely.'

Angela

Breakfast

Below are some suggestions:

- A fried egg with bacon and a slice of fried bread.
- Scrambled eggs or an omelette with grated cheese. Add toast with lots of butter or ghee.
- An English muffin or crumpet with lots of butter, and honey or jam. Then have some stewed fruit, such as prunes or apricots, with Greek or full-fat yoghurt.
- Porridge made with fortified milk, with sugar or honey added.
- Toast with lots of butter and jam, honey or peanut butter.
- Yoghurt with nuts, seeds and dried fruit, or dalia (wheat porridge) with butter.
- Cornmeal porridge and Caribbean hard-dough bread with butter.
- Minced-beef congee or assorted dumplings. Add some deep-fried peanuts.
- A whole-wheat cereal such as Weetabix®, with fortified milk and sugar. Then have toast and spread it with lots of butter and jam, peanut butter or sliced banana.

Try drinking fruit juice or a smoothie after breakfast.

Auto Menu

AUTO
REHEAT

1

VEGETABLE

2

FISH

3

MEAT

4

PASTA

5

POTATO

6

PIZZA

7

SOUP

8

CASSEROLES

9

POWER
LEVEL

SPEED
DEFROST

0

START

STOP



Lunch

Below are some suggestions:

- A tuna and cucumber sandwich with lots of butter, mayonnaise or salad cream.
- A hard-boiled egg sandwich or a chicken sandwich.
- A baked potato with grated cheese. Mash the inside of the potato with extra butter. Add a bowl of baked beans and a side salad with dressing, mayonnaise or salad cream.
- A cheese and salad sandwich. Be generous with the filling and add mayonnaise.
- Stuffed paratha or chapati with vegetables or rice, vegetable curry, hard-boiled egg and potato curry. Use ghee, butter or extra oil for cooking.
- Steamed red mullet with vegetables, topped with some olive oil or butter and served with rice or potatoes.
- Noodles, plain rice or fried rice with mixed seafood or meat and vegetables.
- Chicken soup and a hard-boiled egg sandwich.

Try having rice pudding or some fruit after lunch too. We have more ideas for puddings on page 32.

Dinner

Below are some suggestions:

- Lasagne or spaghetti bolognese with cheese. You could use a meat substitute, such as soya mince, Quorn or lentils, for a vegetarian option. Add a side salad with dressing, mayonnaise or salad cream.
- Grilled salmon or trout, with new potatoes and green beans. Use tartar sauce and add butter to the vegetables.
- Roast chicken with potatoes and fresh vegetables. Add butter to the vegetables and potatoes.
- Lamb curry with pulses (or use soya mince, Quorn or lentils) and salad.
- Khichari (lentils and rice), lentil soup or shorba (lamb and chicken soup).
- Caribbean chicken with mashed potato (with added butter, cream and cheese), callaloo and sweetcorn. Add butter to the vegetables.
- Winter melon soup with spare ribs.
- Steamed fish with black bean sauce and plain rice.
- Shepherd's pie with carrots and peas (or use soya mince, Quorn or lentils). Serve with butter and use fortified milk in the mashed potato or grated cheese on top.

Try having fruit, custard or fruit crumble after dinner. We have more pudding suggestions on the next page.

pudding

Below are some suggestions:

- Stewed fruit with fresh cream.
- Fruit crumble with fresh cream or custard.
- Fruit yogurt or fromage frais – choose a full-fat variety.
- Fresh custard – ready-made or made with fresh cream.
- Fresh fruit such as mango, orange, banana, lychee or pineapple.
- Fruit or chocolate trifle – choose a full-fat variety.
- Rice pudding.

Try adding ice-cream, cream or evaporated milk to cold puddings. Try adding custard made with fortified milk to hot puddings. You could add sugar or syrup to puddings too. Try making instant desserts with fortified milk.

You could also try some pudding recipes using different ready-made or powdered supplements. Manufacturers of nutritional products often have recipe booklets. Check the packets or their websites for more information.

‘From having radiotherapy I lost my taste for food and a stone in weight, and it made me really weak. The Macmillan dietitian has been very good to me, she’s lovely and has recommended drinks and desserts to build up my strength.’

Francesco

Snacks

Keep snacks to eat if you feel hungry between meals. For example, you could try:

- nuts
- pasteurised cheese
- fresh or dried fruit
- biscuits
- crackers
- breadsticks and dips
- yoghurts or fromage frais
- a bowl of cereal with milk.

If you are out of the house for some time during the day, for example if you are going to radiotherapy appointments, think about taking some snacks or a nourishing drink with you.

Drinks

Add energy and protein to coffee, tea or bedtime drinks, by using fortified or full-fat milk instead of water. Or add three teaspoons of a high-energy powder (prescribed by your doctor or dietitian) to hot or cold drinks. Ready-made nutritional supplement drinks can be drunk straight from the packet, gently heated or used in recipes.

If you can't face a meal, you could try a nourishing drink instead. You can also drink these between meals to help you put on weight.

You might want to make your own drinks, such as fruit milkshakes or smoothies. Here are some examples:

- Fruit smoothie – blend fresh banana, peaches, strawberries or other soft fruit (fresh or frozen) with fortified milk, fruit juice, ice-cream or yoghurt.
- Milk smoothie – blend 200ml of full-fat milk, 2 tablespoons of milk powder, 2 scoops of ice-cream and some milkshake syrup or powder. You could use Nesquik® or Crusha® and follow the manufacturer's instructions for how much to add. Blend until well-mixed and frothy. You can change the flavour of the ice-cream to match the milkshake syrup or powder.
- Nutritious milkshake – mix fortified milk with puréed fruit or a fruit yoghurt and add 2 to 3 teaspoons of a high-energy powder supplement (prescribed by your GP or dietitian). A scoop of ice-cream will add extra energy.

Substituting ingredients

Feel free to use different ingredients from the ones we have suggested.

If you do not eat dairy products, you can replace:

- milk with soya, oat, rice, hazelnut, almond or coconut milk
- cream with coconut cream
- butter with olive oil, rapeseed oil, vegetable or coconut oil, or dairy-free spreads
- yoghurt with soya or coconut yoghurt.

Spices can help if you have lost some sense of taste or smell and want something with strong flavours (check the packaging to see how hot or spicy it is). But if highly flavoured foods do not appeal to you, make these dishes milder by swapping ingredients or adding natural yoghurt.



COPING WITH WEIGHT LOSS

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Your feelings about weight loss

Weight loss can be upsetting and difficult to cope with, as it can be a visible reminder of your illness. It can also affect your body image. Body image is the picture you have in your mind of how you look (your size, shape and form), and how you feel about your body.

When you lose weight due to cancer or its treatment, you will see a different image of yourself from the one you are used to. It can be hard for some people to accept that they look different because they have lost weight. You may feel angry, anxious or sad. It is natural to feel like this and it is part of adapting to the way you see yourself. You may meet other people who have similar thoughts and feelings.

You may worry that the change in your appearance will affect relationships with a partner, family and friends. You may be anxious about what people think of you or about being rejected. Or you may feel self-conscious about eating at home or out with your family or friends.

We have a booklet called **Body image and cancer** that could help with these feelings. We also have information about coping with your emotions in our booklet **How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer**. To order these booklets, call us on **0808 808 00 00** or visit **be.macmillan.org.uk**

Talking about how you feel

People often keep their thoughts and feelings about their bodies to themselves. But keeping your worries hidden can make them grow into something bigger, so it is important to talk to someone.

Many people find that it helps to talk to someone close to them. If you find it difficult to talk about your feelings with a partner, family or friends, you could talk to your doctor or specialist nurse. Some people also find it helpful to speak to a counsellor. Your GP or nurse can give you advice on how to contact one.

If you are close to someone who has changes in their body image, it may also take you time to adjust and accept the changes. You may need to talk about your feelings too.

Getting help with meals

You may not always feel well enough to be able to cook food for yourself or others. If you are the person who usually prepares the meals for your family, it may feel strange to let someone else take charge. Try not to feel guilty about letting someone else do the things you usually do. When you feel better, you can get back to your normal routine.

If you live on your own and need help with cooking or shopping, contact your GP, district nurse or social worker. They may be able to arrange for a home helper, meals on wheels or a local organisation to help you with cooking or shopping.

Caring for someone with eating problems or weight loss

If you are the main carer for someone with cancer, it can be upsetting and difficult to know how to deal with eating problems such as lack of appetite or weight loss. People who are very ill often do not feel like eating. Cancer, cancer treatments and medicines can all affect someone's appetite. Feeling sick and having diarrhoea or constipation can stop people eating. Or they may feel too tired to eat, have a sore or dry throat or mouth, or find chewing and swallowing difficult.

It can be frustrating and worrying when someone you are caring for cannot eat very much. Mealtimes are often an enjoyable and important part of family and social life. The amount someone can eat may change each day, and their likes and dislikes may also change. Knowing when their appetite is at its best means you can make the most of it and treat them to their favourite foods.

Tips to help build up someone's diet

- Take time to ask them what they would like to eat.
- Try to talk openly about their weight loss and the different ways you could both manage it. This can help you both feel more in control of the situation.
- Rather than aiming for three meals a day, it might be helpful to try having smaller meals and snacks more often throughout the day.
- Try not to offer drinks before a meal, to prevent them feeling too full to eat.
- Offer their favourite foods at the times when you know their appetite is at its best.
- Make batches of a favourite vegetable soup and freeze some to have as a quick meal at another time.
- Keep snacks in easy reach so they are ready whenever the person feels hungry. Have a look at the shopping list we suggest on pages 25 to 26 and stock up on some items you know they prefer, so you can prepare meals and snacks easily.
- Avoid low-fat or diet products. For example, choose whole milk rather than skimmed milk.
- Try offering a sherry or brandy half an hour before a meal, as some people find this stimulates their appetite. Or a glass of wine with their meal may help their digestion. Check with the doctor or specialist nurse that the person you are caring for can have alcohol.

- Try using energy supplements to add energy to everyday meals and drinks. For example, you could try adding fortified milk to tea or coffee. We have more information on how to build up your diet with food supplements on pages 17 to 20 and meal suggestions on pages 27 to 35. Or we can send you a free copy of our booklet **Recipes for people affected by cancer**. There are also recipes available from the companies that make the energy supplement drinks and powders.
- Encourage regular activity, if possible, as this can help increase someone's appetite. Start off gently with something that is easy to manage. We have information and ideas in our pack **Move more: your guide to becoming more active**.
- If the person you are caring for is experiencing nausea, vomiting, taste changes, a sore mouth or altered bowel habits, speak to their doctor or nurse. They can either prescribe something to help or refer the person you are caring for to a dietitian.
- Make sure you have support and take time to care for yourself.

We have more information in our booklet **Looking after someone with cancer**. To order any of our booklets, visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Serving

- If the person you are caring for finds that certain cooking smells make them feel sick, prepare food in a different room if possible. Serve food in a well-ventilated room.
- Try to create a comfortable eating environment.
- Present meals so they look appetising.
- Keep servings small. Offer second helpings rather than putting too much food on their plate to begin with, as this can be overwhelming and off-putting.
- Try not to worry if they cannot always eat what you have cooked. Gently encourage the person you are caring for to eat, but try not to push them too much.





An essential guide to living with and other people

TALKING ABOUT CANCER

A guide for people with cancer



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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.

Online information

All of our information is also available at **macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support**

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.

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 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Our cancer support specialists can:

- help with any medical questions you have about cancer or your 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](https://www.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](https://www.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, Online Community member

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 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](https://www.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](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/work)**

My Organiser app

Our free mobile app can help you manage your treatment, from appointment times and contact details, to reminders for when to take your medication. Search 'My Organiser' on the Apple App Store or Google Play on your phone.

Other useful organisations

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

Nutrition and diet information and support

British Dietetic Association (BDA)

Tel 0121 200 8080

Email info@bda.uk.com

www.bda.uk.com

Provides training and facilities for registered dietitians.

The website includes food facts, and has information on the role of dietitians and how to find a dietitian.

CORE

Tel 020 7486 0341

Email info@corecharity.org.uk

www.corecharity.org.uk

Funds research into a range of gut, liver, intestinal and bowel illnesses. Its website provides information on digestive disorders, treatments and coping with the effects of digestive disorders.

Diabetes UK

Tel 0345 123 2399

(Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm)

Email info@diabetes.org.uk

Scotland 0141 212 8710

Email scotland@diabetes.co.uk

www.diabetes.org.uk

Gives information and support on any aspect of managing diabetes, including medication, diet and exercise.

General cancer support organisations

Cancer Black Care

Tel 020 8961 4151

Email

info@cancerblackcare.org.uk

www.cancerblackcare.org.uk

Offers UK-wide information and support for people with cancer, as well as their friends, carers and families, with a focus on those from BME communities.

Cancer Focus Northern Ireland

Helpline 0800 783 3339

(Mon to Fri, 9am to 1pm)

Email

nurseline@cancerfocusni.org

www.cancerfocusni.org

Offers a variety of services to people affected by cancer in Northern Ireland, including a free helpline, counselling and links to local support groups.

Cancer Research UK

Helpline 0808 800 4040

(Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

www.cancerresearchuk.org

A UK-wide organisation that has patient information on all types of cancer. Also has a clinical trials database.

Cancer Support Scotland

Tel 0800 652 4531

(Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

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.

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

Tel 0300 123 1801

Email

enquiries@maggiescentres.org

www.maggiescentres.org

Has a network of centres in various locations throughout the UK. Provides free information about cancer and financial benefits. Also offers emotional and social support to people with cancer, their family, and friends.

Penny Brohn UK

Helpline 0303 3000 118

(Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 5pm)

Email

helpline@pennybrohn.org.uk

www.pennybrohn.org.uk

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

Riprap

www.riprap.org.uk

Developed especially for teenagers in the UK who have a parent with cancer. Has an online forum where teenagers going through similar experiences can talk to each other for support.

Tenovus

Helpline 0808 808 1010
(Daily, 8am to 8pm)

Email

info@tenovuscancercare.org.uk

www.

tenovuscancercare.org.uk

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

Counselling

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

Tel 01455 883 300

Email bacp@bacp.co.uk

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

UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

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.

Support for carers

Carers Trust

Tel (England) 0300 772 9600

(Scotland) 0300 123 2008

(Wales) 0292 0090 087

(Northern Ireland)

028 9099 9476

Email info@carers.org

www.carers.org

Provides support, information, advice and services for people caring at home for a family member or friend. You can find details for UK offices and search for local support on the website.

Carers UK

Helpline

(England, Scotland, Wales)

0808 808 7777

(Mon to Fri, 10am to 4pm)

Helpline (Northern Ireland)

028 9043 9843

Email advice@carersuk.org

www.carersuk.org

Offers information and support to carers across the UK. Has an online forum and can put people in contact with support groups for carers in their area.

Support for older people

Age UK

Helpline 0800 055 6112

(Daily, 8am to 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.

LGBT-specific support

LGBT Foundation

Tel 0345 330 3030

(Mon to Fri, 10am to 6pm)

Email helpline@lgbt.foundation

www.lgbt.foundation

Provides a range of services to the LGBT community, including a helpline, email advice and counselling. The website has information on various topics including sexual health, relationships, mental health, community groups and events.

Cancer registries

The cancer registry

A national database that collects information on cancer diagnoses and treatment. This information helps the NHS and other organisations plan and improve health and care services. There is one in each country in the UK:

National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service

Tel 020 7654 8000

Email enquiries@phe.gov.uk

www.ncras.nhs.uk

Tel (Ireland) 021 4318 014

www.ncri.ie (Ireland)

Scottish Cancer Registry

Tel 013 1275 7777

Email nss.csd@nhs.net

[www.isdscotland.org/](http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/)

[Health-Topics/Cancer/](http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/)

[Scottish-Cancer-Registry](http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/)

Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit (WCISU)

Tel 029 2037 3500

Email

general.enquiries@wales.nhs.uk

www.wcisuwales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland Cancer Registry

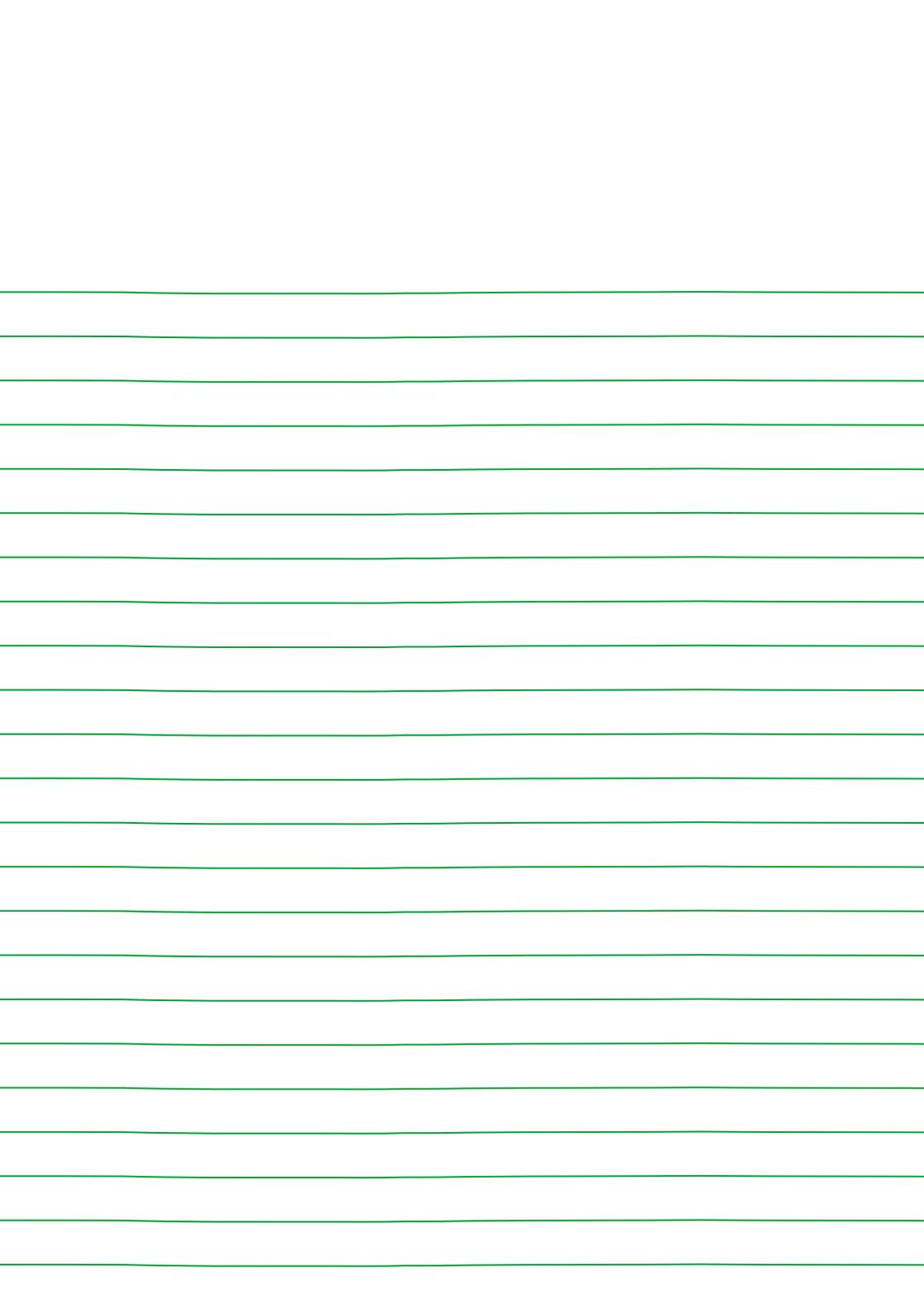
Tel 028 9097 6028

Email nicr@qub.ac.uk

www.qub.ac.uk/nicr



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 Chief Medical Editor, Prof Tim Iveson, Macmillan Consultant Medical Oncologist. With thanks to: June Davis, National Cancer Rehabilitation Lead; Lesley Dempsey, Head and Neck Cancer Specialist Nurse; Pippa Mather, Acting Principal Head and Neck Oncology Dietitian; Barbara Parry, Senior Research Dietitian; Monika Seimicka, Senior Specialist Haematology and TYA Dietitian; Jaspreet Singh, Specialist Oncology Dietitian; Hannah Starling, Senior Specialist Dietitian; Rachel Thompson, Specialist Dietitian (Head and Neck Oncology); Sarah Wheeldon, Macmillan Oncology Dietitian. Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories.

We welcome feedback on our information. If you have any, please contact [**cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk**](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)

Sources

We've listed a sample of the sources used in the booklet below. If you'd like further information about the sources we use, please contact us at [**cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk**](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)

European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN). ESPEN guidelines on nutrition in cancer patients. February 2017.

World Cancer Research Fund. Healthy living after cancer. 2016. Available at: www.wcrf-uk.org/sites/default/files/healthy-living-after-cancer-guide.pdf

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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Security number

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Signature _____

Date / / _____

Don't let the taxman keep your money

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

This booklet is for people who may be finding it difficult to maintain their weight. It explains the different food types and has suggestions on how to get more energy and protein in your diet. It also includes some meal ideas and a suggested shopping list of items that may help you when preparing meals.

We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you. For information, support or just someone to talk to, call **0808 808 00 00** or visit **macmillan.org.uk**

Would you prefer to speak to us in another language? Interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use. Are you deaf or hard of hearing? Call us using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app.

Need information in different languages or formats? We produce information in audio, eBooks, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these, visit **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats** or call our support line

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

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