

# **Your feelings after cancer treatment**



# About this booklet

This booklet is for anyone who has had cancer treatment. You might find it helpful if you are still having treatment. It describes some of the feelings you may be having and suggests things that might help you cope with them.

## How to use this booklet

This booklet is split into sections to help you find what you need. You do not have to read it from start to finish. You can use the [contents list](#) to help you.

It is fine to skip parts of the booklet. You can always come back to them when you feel ready.

On [pages 74 to 83](#), there are details of other organisations that can help.

There is also space to write down notes and questions on [page 84](#).

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.

## Quotes

In this booklet, we have included quotes from people who have been affected by cancer. These are from people who have chosen to share their story with us. This includes Sarah, who is on the cover of this booklet.

To share your experience, visit [macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory)

## 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](tel:08088080000), 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, or visit [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.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, interactive PDFs, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these, visit [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000).

# Contents

Your feelings after treatment **5**

Relationships and work **21**

Ways to look after yourself **29**

More support **49**

Further information **67**



# Your feelings after treatment

After treatment	6
Relief and hope	7
Worry and uncertainty	8
Worrying about cancer coming back	11
Feeling alone	12
Loss of confidence	14
Sadness and depression	16
Anger	18
Other feelings	19

# After treatment

When cancer treatment ends, you may feel relieved. But you might feel sad, angry or uncertain too. This could be because:

- you have side effects or physical changes caused by the cancer or the treatment
- your role in your family, with friends, or at home or work has changed
- you are seeing your cancer doctor less often
- your plans for the future have changed.

For many people, the uncertainty becomes easier to manage over time. But others struggle with their feelings for a long time after treatment has ended. It might be worse if you have felt low or depressed before.

We have more information about how you can help yourself and where to get more support if you need it. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/help](https://macmillan.org.uk/help)

You can also share your experiences and chat to other people affected by cancer on our Online Community at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://macmillan.org.uk/community)

# Relief and hope

When your treatment finishes, you may feel relieved. You do not have to visit the hospital as much. You can start to recover from any side effects. You might think about having a holiday, going back to work or doing other things you used to do.

You might find your view on life has changed after treatment. You may have had time to think about your illness and what you have been through. This could be a positive step.

You may feel you want to move on with a new life. Perhaps different things are important to you now. You may want to make changes at work or at home, try new things or set new goals.





# Worry and uncertainty

You might feel relieved when you finish cancer treatment. But you may also worry whether treatment has worked and what might happen in the future.

Sometimes the aim of treatment is to cure the cancer. But doctors may not use the word cure. This is because some cancers do come back. Everyone's cancer and treatment is different. Sometimes treatment may get the cancer under control, but doctors know it may come back in the future.

Most people who have been through cancer treatment live with some worry and uncertainty. This does not mean they are not coping with life after treatment.

Some people find it hard to cope with uncertainty. They can feel as if they have very little control over their lives. But these feelings can get better over time.

## Coping with uncertainty

It can help to know these feelings of worry and uncertainty are normal. You may always have some of these feelings after a cancer diagnosis. This may be hard and can take time to accept. But there is help and support.

You might find it helpful to focus on what you can control right now. This can help you manage any concerns about what might happen in the future. It can include:

- talking about your feelings
- getting support
- being involved in your own health and well-being
- following advice from your healthcare team
- knowing when you need help and where to get it.

Some of these suggestions may not work for you. There is no right or wrong way to cope.

We have more information about how you can help yourself and where to get more support if you need it. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/help](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/help)





# Worrying about cancer coming back

After treatment, many people worry about whether the cancer will come back. During treatment, you know something is being done to stop or control the cancer. But when treatment ends, you may worry that there is nothing to stop the cancer coming back.

The risk of cancer coming back depends on your situation. For some people, there is only a small risk the cancer will come back.

Other people may be told that the cancer is likely to return. Your doctors may not be able to give you a clear answer about the future, because they do not always know. Whatever your situation, it is normal to be worried about the cancer coming back.

These worries may come and go, or you may have them all the time. Sometimes these feelings can be difficult to cope with. You may find you:

- cannot concentrate
- do not sleep well
- become irritable.

These feelings usually get easier as time goes by. You may find you think about the cancer less often. But there may be times when these feelings get worse again. This could be before a hospital appointment or if you have new symptoms.

# Feeling alone

It is natural to feel lonely and isolated at different times during your cancer diagnosis and treatment. Sometimes you still feel like this after treatment finishes. You may feel lonely even when you are with other people. It may seem like no one understands what you went through. You might feel you have to be brave. This could be because you do not want to upset your family and friends by talking about your feelings.

There can be many reasons why you might feel alone. You may miss the routine of treatment or the relationships you had with hospital staff. If your appearance has changed, you may be less confident about going out. For example, this could be because of hair loss or changes to your weight. These changes can be difficult to cope with, even if they are not obvious to everyone. We have more information in our booklet [Body image and cancer](#) and at [macmillan.org.uk/body-image](http://macmillan.org.uk/body-image)

Side effects such as tiredness may mean you do not go out as much as before. Your family and friends might not realise you feel lonely. Or they may think you want time to yourself. We have more information about tiredness in our booklet [Coping with fatigue \(tiredness\)](#). We also have information on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/fatigue](http://macmillan.org.uk/fatigue)

If you are back at work, you may feel lonely if you or your colleagues are uncomfortable talking about cancer. Some people may assume that you are fine because you are back at work. We have more information about returning to work after treatment in our booklet [Work and cancer](#) and on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/work](http://macmillan.org.uk/work)

Loneliness can be worse if you find it difficult to talk about your feelings. Sometimes it may feel easier to tell people you are okay even if you are not. You may find yourself giving people other reasons for not talking, such as 'I'm just feeling tired'.

## Coping with loneliness

Talking to other people about your feelings can help you feel less alone. Talking to family, friends or a partner might reassure you. Or you might find it more useful to talk to someone in a similar situation to you.

You can talk to other people going through the same thing on our Online Community at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://macmillan.org.uk/community) You can share your own thoughts and feelings, and get support.

You may find that [joining a support group](#) gives you a place to talk.

You can also call the Macmillan Support Line free on [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000). Our cancer support specialists can answer your questions about cancer and your feelings. Or they can just listen.

**“ My Macmillan nurse Maggie was always there if I needed to talk and I felt I couldn't turn to my husband or friends. If there was anything I was worried about, whether it was the chemotherapy or the children, she was my go-to person. ”**

Waheed, diagnosed with bone cancer

# Loss of confidence

Having cancer can make you feel less confident. You may feel that you lost some of your independence during your treatment. Your role in your family or at work may have changed. These roles may be important to how you think about yourself. Your social life may have changed during and after treatment too. You may not be in contact with your friends as much as you were before treatment.

You may worry about what you are able to do and cope with. Or you may feel less comfortable or confident doing things that you found easy before.

Physical changes caused by treatment can also affect your confidence. We have more information about learning to cope with a change to your body in our booklet [Body image and cancer](#) and on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/body-image](http://macmillan.org.uk/body-image)

## Coping with loss of confidence

Building your confidence takes time. You may find that things improve as you start to recover from treatment. You may learn new ways of doing things for yourself again.

It is best to set yourself small goals you know you can meet. Work towards larger goals by breaking them into smaller steps.

Perhaps your goal is to be able to enjoy a holiday, but the thought makes you anxious. Even 1 night away might be worrying. It might help to start by doing a day trip. Go somewhere you know well and can travel to easily. You may decide to only stay for 1 hour or so. The important thing to remember is that this is a step in the right direction.

As you achieve each goal, your confidence will start to grow. Remember to notice every success, no matter how small it seems.

You might want to celebrate or reward yourself somehow. This may be as simple as writing about it in a diary. Or you may be able to do something else you enjoy, such as going to the cinema or out for a meal.





# Sadness and depression

People often have feelings of sadness or loss after treatment. You may feel sad about how things have changed, or about things you cannot do any more. Your mood may be low at times for lots of reasons.

People may have told you to think positively during your treatment. You may hear this even more when your treatment has finished. Being positive does not mean you have to feel happy all the time. It is a positive thing to accept and talk about your feelings, even the difficult ones.

As you begin to recover and move on with your life, feelings of sadness and loss often improve. But for some people, the low mood continues or gets worse. It may become depression.

## Symptoms of depression

Sometimes it is difficult to know whether you are depressed.

Symptoms of depression can include:

- feeling low in mood or sad most of the time
- losing interest in things you used to enjoy, like your hobbies or social life
- changes in sleeping, eating or concentration
- feeling helpless or vulnerable
- problems starting or finishing tasks.

Remember, it is normal to have these feelings sometimes. But if they go on for more than 2 weeks, talk to your doctor or nurse.

If you have any thoughts about self-harm or suicide, you should contact your GP or specialist nurse straight away. Or go to your local A&E (emergency department). You can also call [Samaritans](#) on the free, 24-hour helpline at [116 123](tel:116123).

## Coping with depression

It is important to remember that depression is common and that there are many things that can help. You may need help even after your cancer treatment ends. There are many ways to cope and different types of support.

Some people find that talking about their feelings can help. If you can, talk to your family, friends or partner about how you feel. They can support you. You can also try talking to someone who is going through a similar experience. This might be through a cancer support group or an online social networking site, such as our Online Community. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://macmillan.org.uk/community)

We also have more information about things you can do to help yourself on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/help](https://macmillan.org.uk/help)

If you think you need more support, talk to your GP, specialist nurse or another healthcare professional. They can listen to you or refer you to a counsellor or psychologist. They may also talk to you about medication that can help treat depression.

If you feel very low but cannot contact your healthcare team, you can talk to [Samaritans](#) on the free, 24-hour helpline at [116 123](tel:116123).

We have more information about depression and the types of professional help available. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/depression](https://macmillan.org.uk/depression)



# Anger

It is natural to feel angry when you have had cancer. You may feel angry about going through treatment and having to cope with the side effects. You may be angry if the cancer has caused you to make changes to your life.

Cancer may affect your relationships, family life, work or social life. We have more information about this in our booklet [Cancer and relationships – Support for partners, families and friends](#). You and the people who care about you may find it helpful.

We all show anger in different ways. Some people get impatient or shout. Others get upset and tearful. You may get angry with the people you care about. Anger can hide other feelings, such as being sad or scared.

## Coping with anger

It is important not to hide your feelings if you are angry or upset. It may help to tell people that you are angry about your situation and not at them. Finding ways to relax and reduce stress can help with anger.

Try not to feel guilty about your angry thoughts or irritable moods. Anger can be a strong emotion, and you may find you can use it in a more positive way. For example, it may:

- help you focus on what is important in your life
- give you the determination to start something new, like a hobby or challenge.

If you are angry most of the time or it is starting to affect your life, you may find it helpful to talk to a counsellor or psychologist.

# Other feelings

We have talked about some of the feelings you may have, but you may experience other emotions too. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

We have more information about the emotions you may have on [pages 6 to 18](#), and in our booklet [How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer](#).

**“ Sometimes you feel you need to power on, and people think you are just going to bounce back. But it's alright to need help. Mentally, you are still getting over it. ”**

Sarah



# Relationships and work

Your feelings and relationships	22
Partners	24
Managing work	27

# Your feelings and relationships

Cancer and its treatment can cause many changes in your life. You may be worried about how relationships with friends and family might change.

If you have a partner, you may be worried about changes to your relationship. Or you might be thinking about starting a new relationship. Even close families or couples who have been together for a long time can have problems.

But some changes will be positive. Going through an experience like cancer can make relationships stronger.

Every relationship is different. It is important to spend some time finding out what the other person thinks and feels. It is also important to remember that people deal with things in their own way.

Even after treatment, people may not understand what life is like for you. They may expect you to get back to normal straight away. They may not know how to support you, or even that you still need support.

## Getting support

There is support available for you and for your friends, family or partner. We have more information in our booklets:

- [Talking about cancer](#)
- [Talking with someone who has cancer](#)
- [Looking after someone with cancer](#)
- [Cancer and relationships – Support for partners, families and friends.](#)

There may also be support available in your local community. Some hospitals offer talking therapies to family members. If you think it would help, ask your healthcare team.

We have more information about local support groups at [macmillan.org.uk/inyourarea](https://macmillan.org.uk/inyourarea) Or you can talk to one of our cancer support specialists on [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000).





# Partners

Cancer can affect your relationships and sex life. These changes may be practical, emotional or physical:

- Practical – your roles and responsibilities at home and work may be different now. For example, you may have new ways of managing housework, childcare or finances.
- Emotional – your feelings about each other may change. Your relationship may be stronger or more complicated.
- Physical – you may be coping with side effects or physical changes after treatment. Having sex or how you both feel about sex may be different. Some cancer treatments can affect your fertility. This might change any plans to have children.



We have more information about how cancer can affect relationships, your sex life and fertility in our booklets:

- [Cancer and relationships – Support for partners, families and friends](#)
- [Cancer and your sex life](#)
- [Cancer and fertility](#).

You may be facing challenges in your relationship that you did not expect. Everyone copes with these in their own way. Think about how you have coped with challenges in the past. It usually helps to be open and honest with each other about how you feel.

You can order our booklets and leaflets for free.  
Visit [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk) or call us on [0808 808 00 00](tel:0808 808 00 00).



## New partners

You might feel differently about starting new relationships after having cancer. You might worry how someone else will react when you say you had cancer. If your body has changed after treatment, you may worry about what new partners will think.

You may find it hard to decide what to tell new partners and when. If you think that you need some help, you can get support from family, friends or a support organisation such as [Relate](#), [Relate NI](#) or [Relationships Scotland](#).

You can also call our cancer support specialists on [0808 808 00 00](tel:0808 808 00 00).

**“ I put myself first now. I don't work late anymore. I used to work late all the time. My job and the social life that came with it was my life. But now, whatever happens, it's fine. Yes, I want to be successful. But more importantly, I want to be happy and I want to be healthy. ”**

Sarah

# Managing work

For some people, work is an important part of life. But if you find work difficult to cope with, you may need to take time off until you feel better. It can help to talk with your employer about the best way to manage this.

It is important to remember that your feelings can affect you when you are at work too. Sometimes it helps to talk to your employer or colleagues about this. This can help them understand what you are dealing with. Let them know what to expect and what you want from them.

You may prefer not to talk about your cancer or cancer treatment at work. Keeping this separate may be your way of coping.

Going back to work after cancer treatment can feel very different from before. Sometimes priorities can change after life events. You may want to consider a different working pattern, such as working at home, working part-time hours or returning to work slowly and building up.

We have more information about managing work and talking to your employer or colleagues in our booklet [Work and cancer](#) and on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/work](http://macmillan.org.uk/work)



# Ways to look after yourself

Moving forward	30
Talking and getting support	31
Self-help and support groups	33
Online support	35
Write down your feelings	36
Be kind to yourself	38
Looking ahead	46

# Moving forward

Try not to ignore your emotions after cancer treatment. These feelings are a natural response to what has happened. Some people find life after cancer harder than when they were going through treatment. There are many things you can do to support your mental health when you are living with or after cancer, or you are recovering from treatment.

Everyone is different. There is no right way or right time to deal with what you have been through. There are things you can try, such as:

- [talking therapies](#)
- [support groups](#)
- [online chat forums](#).

You can also chat to people on our Online Community. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://macmillan.org.uk/community)



# Talking and getting support

Some people find it difficult to talk about the cancer and how it is affecting them. It might feel upsetting or uncomfortable. But talking to someone about how you feel can help you cope with your emotions and feel better. It might help you make decisions about the future.

You may want to talk to your partner, family member or friend. Or you may find it easier to talk to someone you do not know as well. This could be your cancer doctor, GP or specialist nurse, or a religious or spiritual leader.

Your doctor or nurse may be able to refer you to a psychologist or counsellor. Some organisations like [Mind](#) can offer this type of support too. Visit [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

[Life after Cancer](#) is an organisation that can help you find support after cancer treatment. They offer 1-to-1 and support group options. Visit [life-aftercancer.co.uk](http://life-aftercancer.co.uk)

You might find [self-help groups](#) or [online communities](#) useful. This can be a good option if you find it hard to talk to family or friends. You can also speak to our cancer support specialists on the Macmillan Support Line.

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on [0808 808 00 00](tel:0808808000), 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.





## How talking can help

There are a few ways that talking may help you:

- Talking about things may make you feel less anxious. Having someone listen and care can reassure you that you are not alone.
- You may get to hear other people's thoughts and feelings about what has happened. You may find this comforting. Talking about things together may help with making decisions.
- It can help you better understand your thoughts and feelings. Saying things out loud can sometimes make them less scary.
- Having a lot of different feelings can feel overwhelming. Breaking them down may make them feel more manageable. It can help to see things more clearly.
- You may feel a mix of emotions when you are diagnosed with cancer or when you are moving forward after cancer. They are not always the emotions you might expect, so it can help you to know that these feelings are natural.

**“ I remember on a particularly bad day I rang one of my friends and I asked him to come and see me. He dropped everything and came and sat by my bed and just told me jokes to make me laugh. ”**

Jacqueline, diagnosed with breast cancer

# Self-help and support groups

Joining a self-help or cancer support group can have many benefits. Some of the benefits of joining a group can include:

- gaining a sense of community and knowing that you are not alone
- listening to and learning from the experiences of others
- participating in activities to support your well-being
- sharing common feelings and coping strategies
- making new friends, being more confident and enjoying yourself.

Some groups are for people with a specific type of cancer. For example, there are breast cancer care groups and laryngectomy groups. There are also support groups for families and carers.

It may help to go along to see what the group is like before you decide to join. You might want to take someone with you.

## Courses for people affected by cancer

Some cancer centres and organisations run short courses for people living with or after cancer. Your specialist nurse, cancer doctor or information centre may be able to give you information about courses in your area.

Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) is a course to help people after cancer treatment. It was developed by Hope for the Community and Macmillan Cancer Support. It is a 6-week self-management course that is run online.

You can learn more and book onto a course on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/hope-programme](https://macmillan.org.uk/hope-programme)

**“ I used the Community to vent my worries to others who’d been in my situation. I still go on now just to read what others have posted and to see if I can offer to help someone else. ”**

Sarah

# Online support

If you use the internet, you can join an online support group or chat room. There are groups about different types of cancer. There are more general groups where people chat about practical and emotional issues. There are also groups for carers, family members and friends.

You can share your own thoughts and feelings by posting messages for others to read and reply to. Or you can just read other people's comments or posts. These messages can sometimes be helpful. They can also be sad and difficult to read. It may help to know that other people feel like you do. You may feel less alone and learn how other people cope.

This might be helpful for you if you find it difficult to talk face to face. Online groups are also easy to leave. You do not need to say why you are leaving.

Our Online Community offers this type of support. It is quick and easy to join. You can talk to people in our chat rooms, blog about your experiences, make friends and join support groups. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)

# Write down your feelings

Some people find it helps to write down how they are feeling. Keeping a diary, journal or online blog can be a way of expressing how you feel without having to talk about it.

You might want to write down how you are feeling, but you may not be sure where to start. You can try using our Good days/Bad days tool. You can use this to write down what makes a day good or bad for you. We all have days when both good and bad things happen.

There is space to write any next steps to help you have more good days. Look at your lists and ask yourself:

- What can I do to have more good days?
- Is there anything I can do to make sure I have fewer bad days?

The thinking tool was written by people affected by cancer. You can find more tools, stories and help using the tools by visiting [thinkaboutyourlife.org](http://thinkaboutyourlife.org)

Writing things down does not work for everybody. Some people prefer to paint, draw or play music.

<b>Good days</b>	<b>Bad days</b>
I slept well	I woke up at 3am and felt tired for the rest of the day
<b>Next steps</b>	
Write down my worries before I go to bed	

# Be kind to yourself

Find time to do something you enjoy every day. This may be:

- watching your favourite TV programme
- reading a magazine
- doing a hobby.

Try to find time to see friends or family members regularly. It is good to do this even if you do not feel like it. Spending time with other people can help improve your mood if you feel down.

Recognise your successes, even the small ones. This will help build your confidence as you get back into your usual routine.

**“ I've been learning to accept that who I was 4 years ago is different to who I am now. Now I avoid stress and try to remain relaxed and take each day at a time. ”**

Jacqueline, diagnosed with breast cancer



## Eat well

Having a healthy, balanced diet is one of the best things you can do for your general health. Eating well can help you feel like you are taking control of your health and well-being. It can help you:

- keep or rebuild your strength
- maintain a healthy weight
- have more energy
- increase your sense of well-being.

There is no evidence that eating a particular diet can cure cancer. But a healthy, balanced diet can help reduce the risk of new cancers and other diseases, such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

There is a lot of misleading information about cancer and diet. This is called misinformation. It is always good to check information with your healthcare team. They can help and support you.



They can also give you advice that is suitable for you. You may have different needs relating to your cancer type, or from effects of cancer treatments. It is always best to check with your healthcare team.

But a general, well-balanced diet should include:

- 5 portions of fresh fruit and vegetables a day
- meals with high-fibre starchy food such as potatoes, bread, rice and pasta
- protein-rich foods, such as chicken, oily fish, eggs, nuts and pulses (such as beans and lentils)
- dairy (such as cheese and yoghurt) and dairy alternatives (such as soya) that contain calcium
- plenty of fluids (at least 6 to 8 glasses a day).

Try to use unsaturated spreads and oils, and use small amounts. Also, try to eat smaller amounts of:

- foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar
- red and processed meat (such as bacon, ham and sausages)
- pickled or smoked food.

Your healthcare team can tell you if there are any foods that might be best to avoid depending on the cancer and any treatment you have had. If you are concerned about your weight, talk to your GP or practice nurse. They can advise you on the right weight for your height. This is called body mass index (BMI). They can also give you advice if you need to lose or gain weight.

We have more information in our booklets:

- [Healthy eating and cancer](#)
- [The building-up diet.](#)

## Be physically active

When you are living with or after cancer, being physically active can help you feel better. Sometimes it can be hard to know when and where to start. You may worry that you are too tired or there are some things you should not do. You can ask your healthcare team what might be suitable.

Whatever exercise you are able to do is better than not exercising at all. Exercise helps the brain produce chemicals that improve mood and reduce stress. These are called endorphins. It can feel like you are doing something positive for your health and well-being.

Being physically active can:

- help you feel less tired and improve your sleep
- help with side effects of cancer treatment
- improve your mood and help support your mental health
- manage your weight
- improve your fitness, strength and balance
- reduce the risk of other health problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes
- improve your bone health and help your heart and lungs – we have more information in our booklets [Bone health](#) and [Heart health and cancer treatment](#).

Getting active with others can help, such as taking regular walks with family and friends or a walking group. You could join a cancer rehabilitation programme and exercise with other people with similar experiences. Gardening or other outdoor activity can improve your mood too.

We have more information about this in our booklet [Physical activity and cancer](#).

## Get enough sleep

Most people need around 8 hours of good-quality sleep a night.

Cancer can make you worried and anxious. This may affect your sleep. Many people find their sleep pattern changes and it can be harder to get off to sleep or stay asleep.

There are some things you can do to try and improve your sleep, such as:

- going to bed and getting up at the same time every day
- relaxing for 1 hour before bed, by taking a bath or reading a book – try to avoid looking at your mobile phone, tablet or computer, or watching television
- being physically active during the day, but not exercising for at least 4 hours before bed
- making sure your bedroom is dark and quiet
- avoiding alcohol, smoking and drinks that contain caffeine (such as tea and coffee) for 6 hours before bed.

If worry and anxiety are keeping you awake, talking to someone may help. Writing down your worries before going to bed can help clear your mind. Breathing and relaxation exercises may also help reduce anxiety and stress. If sleep problems are not improving, talk to your GP or pharmacist.

We have more information about how cancer may affect your sleep on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/trouble-sleeping](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/trouble-sleeping)



## Stop smoking

If you smoke, stopping is one of the healthiest choices you can make. Stopping smoking reduces your risk of heart and lung disease, bone thinning (osteoporosis), and smoking-related cancers. It may also reduce the chances of cancer coming back.

[The NHS](#) has more information about stopping smoking.

## Follow sensible drinking guidelines

NHS guidelines recommend that people:

- do not drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week
- have a few alcohol-free days every week.

A unit of alcohol is a:

- half pint of ordinary-strength beer, lager or cider
- small glass (125ml) of wine
- single measure (25ml) of spirits.

Alcohol is linked with an increased risk of some cancers. It can also cause weight gain. Following sensible drinking guidelines is good for your overall health.

Drinkaware has more information about [alcohol and drinking guidelines](#). Visit [drinkaware.co.uk](http://drinkaware.co.uk)

## Avoid recreational drugs

Recreational drugs can affect your health and relationships. It is important that you tell your healthcare team if you use recreational drugs. Some recreational drugs can affect your prescribed medication. If you are worried about this, or you need help and support, talk to your doctor or nurse.

## Make time to relax

One way of coping with stress is making time to relax. Doing things that you enjoy and being with family or friends can distract you from the things you worry about. It can help you feel more positive. Making time for activities you enjoy can also help you relax. You may want to start a new hobby or try an activity you have always wanted to do.

There are relaxation techniques you can use to help you relax and cope with stress. These include meditation, yoga, regular physical activity and having a massage.



# Looking ahead

Your worries about the cancer coming back may never go away completely. At times, it may feel overwhelming. It is important to talk to someone if you feel like this. It is still possible to live a full life with the right [help and support](#).

Going back to work or starting to do the things you did before are important steps forward. We have more information about work and cancer:

- in our booklet [Work and cancer](#)
- on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/work](http://macmillan.org.uk/work)

Having cancer can lead to positive life changes. Sometimes it can focus your mind on what is important to you. This can include spending more time with the people you care about or making time for the things you have always wanted to do.

Having plans can help move your focus away from the cancer. Doing something new can help distract and relax you. Some hobbies help you express your feelings – for example, learning to play a musical instrument or painting.

You may decide to be more active. For example, you may start cycling, doing yoga, dancing or join a walking group. You do not have to be good at these activities to enjoy them. Check for any groups or classes in your area. Find something you enjoy and feel comfortable with.

When you feel ready, you may decide to do some volunteer work. You could try to find something that matters to you or makes you feel part of your community.

These are all different ways to help you feel you are moving forward.

**“ My parents raised me with the attitude to never give up, and that is certainly my attitude with cancer. I have good days and bad days, but I just need to take each day as it comes. ”**

Nick, diagnosed with bowel cancer





# More support

Help from your healthcare team	50
Help from your GP	52
Self-referral	54
Talking to family and friends	57
Talking therapies	58
Mindfulness and meditation	63

# Help from your healthcare team

Many people get a lot of emotional support from the hospital staff who take care of them during their treatment.

If you are having cancer treatment, you will have a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or key worker. They are often your main contact at the hospital. They can give you and your family information and emotional support.

They can help with concerns you feel you cannot talk to your cancer doctor about. They will also have details of local support groups and other organisations that may be able to help.



# Help from your GP

Speaking to your GP can be the first step in getting support with your mental health. But talking about your feelings can be difficult. Before your appointment, try to plan what you want to say. It can help to write things down. Appointments are usually short, but planning ahead will help you get what you need from your GP.

When you are with your GP, tell them how you really feel. Focus on what you are most worried about. This will help them give you the most helpful advice or treatment.

You may want to take a family member or friend with you to the appointment. They can help you remember everything you want to discuss. After the appointment, they can also remind you what the doctor said. Some GPs are happy for you to record the discussion so you can listen to it later. Ask your GP if this is okay before you start.

There are many healthcare professionals who can help you cope with your feelings and emotions. Each has a different role, but usually you will only need the help of 1 or 2 of them. Your doctor may refer you to 1 of the following professionals:

- A counsellor is trained to listen and help people talk through their problems. They will not give advice or answers, but they can help you find your own ways to solve problems.
- A clinical psychologist is trained to understand what people think and feel, and how they behave. They can help you consider thoughts or patterns of behaviour that are causing you problems. This is helpful in stressful situations, such as coping with cancer. They can also help people with their relationships.
- A psychiatrist is a doctor trained to diagnose and treat mental health problems, including depression and anxiety. Some psychiatrists are specially trained in looking after the mental health of people with cancer.
- A community psychiatric nurse is trained to help people live with all types of mental health problems.

At the start, you may not feel comfortable talking about your feelings. But this should get easier. It is important to be open and honest with healthcare professionals. This will help you get the information and support that you need.

# Self-referral

In England, you can get free talking therapies through [the NHS](#). These are for common mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression. You can contact the service yourself or your GP can refer you. Go to [nhs.uk/service-search](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search)

In Scotland, you can call [0800 328 9655](tel:08003289655) to access the cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) telephone service. They will ask you to provide some details. They will then arrange an assessment appointment to discuss the service and how they can help. Visit [nhs24.scot/living-life](https://nhs24.scot/living-life) to find out more.

In Wales, there is no self-referral scheme. You will need to visit your GP for referral to counselling services through [the NHS](#).

In Northern Ireland, you can call [Lifeline](#) on [0808 808 8000](tel:08088088000) to talk to a trained counsellor. They will help you identify the support you need. They can then arrange a face-to-face counselling appointment in your local area. This is usually within 7 days. Visit [lifelinehelpline.info](https://lifelinehelpline.info) for more information.

## Waiting times

Not all areas offer the same services, and waiting times can be long. While you wait, it is important to get the support you need.

[Many organisations](#) offer support.

You may be able to get support on the phone, online, by email or face-to-face through [local support groups](#). If waiting times are long, it might be better to use self-referral while you are waiting.

You can also think about things that helped you cope in the past and use those coping strategies until you are able to access help. It can help to keep a diary of your feelings and moods. If you start to feel worse, talk to your GP, cancer doctor or specialist nurse.







# Talking to family and friends

If you can, talk openly about your feelings with people you trust. It can help you feel less anxious and frightened. Try to start a conversation and say how you feel. You may be surprised at how willing people are to listen and support you. Asking someone for support can show that you value them.

You might feel that you have to protect family and friends. This might look like always being positive and pretending that you are doing well. Or you might not talk about your worries in case you are a burden.

The people who care about you usually want to know how you are really feeling. Then they can support you. Being open also shows family and friends that it is okay for them to talk about their own feelings.

Sometimes it can be difficult to talk, even with close family and friends. You may worry about upsetting them or having to deal with their feelings, too. You may think they will not understand how you feel. But their reactions may surprise you. Some reactions may be disappointing, but people are often more supportive than you expect.

If there are times you do not feel like talking to family and friends, you can call the Macmillan Support Line to talk to one of our cancer support specialists.

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000), 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.



# Talking therapies

Talking therapies involve talking to a trained therapist about your thoughts and feelings. They can help with anxiety and depression.

A therapist may be a counsellor or psychologist. You may meet your therapist regularly. This is usually once a week for several months. Some people continue to see a therapist for years.

All therapy sessions are confidential. This means you can trust your therapist with information that may be personal or feel embarrassing.

Therapists work with you to understand the difficulties you are facing and suggest different ways you might cope with them.

Types of talking therapies include:

- [counselling](#)
- [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#)
- psychotherapy.

Different types of therapies may suit different people or problems. You usually have an assessment first to find out more about your needs.

Therapy may be:

- 1-to-1 or in a group
- online or over the phone
- with your family or partner.

Other types of therapy, such as mindfulness and meditation, involve practising techniques by yourself in your own time.

Your GP or a member of your healthcare team may be able to refer you for NHS talking therapies. Or you can contact the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#) to find information about private therapy.

We have more information about talking therapies on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/talking-therapies](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/talking-therapies)



## Counselling

Counselling can help you talk about your feelings. It is a type of talking therapy. At your appointment, you can talk to a trained counsellor, who will listen and support you without judging you.

Counsellors will not usually give advice or tell you what to do. But they can help you:

- cope with changes in your relationships
- think about what is important to you
- deal with practical problems
- find new ways of coping.

Some GPs, hospitals and cancer treatment centres have their own counsellors, or they can refer you to one. If your employer has an employee assistance programme (EAP), you can often contact a counsellor that way. Ask your employer for more information about this.

Counselling may be free, or you may need to pay for it. This is more likely if you see a counsellor long term.

You can call the Macmillan Support Line for more information about finding a counsellor. Or you can contact the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#).

If you are in crisis or having suicidal feelings, you can call [999](tel:999) or [Samaritans](tel:116123) on [116 123](tel:116123) at any time of the day or night. You can also call the Macmillan Support Line so they can direct you towards services that can help.

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on [0808 808 00 00](tel:0808808000), 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.



## Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a talking therapy. It can help you manage your problems better by changing the way you think and behave. It can be used to treat anxiety, panic attacks, depression or other health problems.

The way we think and behave can have a powerful effect on how we feel. People who are anxious or depressed often have unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaviour. These can lead to the problem getting worse. CBT helps you change these negative patterns.

The therapist will help you recognise the negative thoughts and help you find ways to change them. They will also help you find out which things give you a sense of satisfaction and pleasure.

You can ask your cancer doctor, specialist nurse or GP about any local support services that are available to you. You can also search for therapists on the [British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies \(BABCP\)](#) website at [babcp.com](http://babcp.com).

# Mindfulness and meditation

Mindfulness is being aware of your thoughts and feelings in the present moment. It uses techniques like meditation, breathing exercises and yoga to help you focus on what is happening at that time. It can help you change the way you think about things. This can help reduce stress and anxiety. You can search for mindfulness apps online.

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) uses the techniques of mindfulness with some cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to help you change how you think. MBCT was developed to support people in chronic pain and has been used in cancer support.

MBCT is usually taught as an 8-week course, either in groups or individually. Some centres in the UK offer MBCT classes from [the NHS](#). You can also learn MBCT online at [bemindfulonline.com](http://bemindfulonline.com).

Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) also uses mindfulness. It focuses on accepting what you cannot control or change, while still doing things that will improve your quality of life.



Mindfulness classes are available from:

- [the NHS](#) – ask your doctor about what is available in your area or at your hospital
- [Every Mind Matters](#) – you can find a free mind plan and tips to help deal with stress and anxiety at [nhs.uk/every-mind-matters](https://nhs.uk/every-mind-matters)
- [Mind](#) – courses are available throughout England and Wales
- Buddhist Centres – courses are available in England, Scotland and Wales
- [Aware NI](#) – the national depression charity for Northern Ireland runs courses in mindfulness
- a private practitioner – search for a certified mindfulness teacher at [bemindful.co.uk](https://bemindful.co.uk).

You can learn more by visiting [mentalhealth.org.uk/publications](https://mentalhealth.org.uk/publications) and choosing 'How to look after your mental health using mindfulness'.

Some cancer support groups or organisations may offer relaxation, massage, aromatherapy or reflexology. You can ask your cancer doctor or specialist nurse whether these are suitable for you.

Relaxation exercises can help you learn to relax your breathing or your body. You can find more information about stress and anxiety on [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk)

You might find it helpful to visit [anxietyuk.org.uk](https://anxietyuk.org.uk) There are also many online apps or podcasts you can use at home.

You can ask your GP about relaxation exercises. They may be able to refer you to a healthcare professional who can show you how to do them.





# Further information

About our information	68
Other ways we can help you	70
Other useful organisations	74
Your notes and questions	84

# 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 booklets or leaflets like this one.

Visit [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk) or call us on [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000).

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

## Online information

All our information is also available online at [macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support](http://macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support) You can also find videos featuring 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
- interactive PDFs
- large print
- translations.

Find out more at [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](http://macmillan.org.uk/otherformats)

If you would like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at [cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk) or call us on 0808 808 00 00.

## The language we use

We want everyone affected by cancer to feel our information is written for them.

We want our information to be as clear as possible. To do this, we try to:

- use plain English
- explain medical words
- use short sentences
- use illustrations to explain text
- structure the information clearly
- make sure important points are clear.

We use gender-inclusive language and talk to our readers as 'you' so that everyone feels included. Where clinically necessary we use the terms 'men' and 'women' or 'male' and 'female'. For example, we do so when talking about parts of the body or mentioning statistics or research about who is affected.

To find out more about how we produce our information, visit [macmillan.org.uk/ourinfo](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/ourinfo)



# Other ways we can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we are 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. We 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.

Our trained cancer information advisers can listen and signpost you to further support. Call us on [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000). We are open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.

You can also email us, or use the Macmillan Chat Service via our website. You can use the chat service to ask our advisers about anything that is worrying you. Tell them what you would like to talk about so they can direct your chat to the right person. Click on the 'Chat to us' button, which appears on pages across the website. Or go to [macmillan.org.uk/talktous](https://macmillan.org.uk/talktous)

If you would like to talk to someone in a language other than English, we also offer an interpreter service for our Macmillan Support Line. Call [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000) and say, in English, the language you want to use. Or send us a web chat message saying you would like an interpreter. Let us know the language you need and we'll arrange for an interpreter to contact you.

## **Macmillan Information and Support Centres**

Our Information and Support Centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. Visit one to get the information you need and speak with someone face to face. If you would like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone confidentially.

Find your nearest centre at [macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres](https://macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres) or call us on [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000).

## **Help with money worries**

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you have been affected in this way, we can help. Please note the opening times may vary by service.

### **Financial guidance**

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

### **Help accessing benefits**

Our welfare rights advisers can help you find out what benefits you might be entitled to, and help you complete forms and apply for benefits. They can also tell you more about other financial help that may be available to you. We can also tell you about benefits advisers in your area. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport](https://macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport) to find out more about how we can help you with your finances.



## Help with energy costs

Our energy advisers can help if you have difficulty paying your energy bills (gas, electricity and water). They can help you get access to schemes and charity grants to help with bills, advise you on boiler schemes and help you deal with water companies.

## Macmillan Grants

Macmillan offers one-off payments to people with cancer. A grant can be for anything from heating bills or extra clothing, to changes needed to your home.

Call us on [0808 808 00 00](tel:0808 808 00 00) to find out more about Macmillan Grants.

## Help with work and cancer

Whether you are 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://macmillan.org.uk/work)

## Work support

Our dedicated team of work support advisers can help you understand your rights at work. Call us on [0808 808 00 00](tel:0808 808 00 00) to speak to a work support adviser.

## 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 is why we help bring people together in their communities and online.

## Support groups

Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, family member or friend, 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://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://macmillan.org.uk/community)

You can also use our Ask an Expert service on the Online Community. You can ask a financial guide, cancer information nurse, work support adviser or an information and support adviser any questions you have.

## Macmillan healthcare professionals

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.

# Other useful organisations

There are lots of other organisations that can give you information or support. Details correct at time of printing.

## **Counselling**

### **British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)**

Tel [0330 320 0851](tel:03303200851)

[www.babcp.com](http://www.babcp.com)

Promotes the practice, theory and development of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) in the UK and Ireland. You can search for therapists on the 'Find a therapist' page.

### **British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**

Tel [0145 588 3300](tel:01455883300)

[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

Promotes awareness of counselling and signposts people to appropriate services across the UK. You can also search for a qualified counsellor on the 'How to find a therapist' page.

## **Relate**

[www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

Offers a range of services to help with couple and family relationships. Available face to face, by phone and online.

## **Relate NI**

[www.relateni.org](http://www.relateni.org)

Offers counselling services to support people and their relationships across Northern Ireland. Available face to face, by phone and online.

## **Relationships Scotland**

Tel [0345 119 2020](tel:03451192020)

[www.relationships-scotland.org.uk](http://www.relationships-scotland.org.uk)

Provides relationship counselling, family mediation, child contact centres and many other forms of family support services across all of mainland and island Scotland.

## **UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)**

Tel [0207 014 9955](tel:02070149955)

[www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk)

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

## **Emotional and mental health support**

### **Anxiety UK**

Infoline [0344 477 5774](tel:03444775774)

Text **0753 741 6905**

[www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Provides help, information and support for people with anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression.

### **Aware NI**

Tel [0289 035 7820](tel:02890357820) (Belfast) or [0287 126 0602](tel:02871260602) (Derry/Londonderry)

[www.aware-ni.org](http://www.aware-ni.org)

Has 23 support groups across Northern Ireland run by trained volunteers, for people with depression and bipolar disorder, and their carers.

### **Be Mindful**

Tel [0127 332 5136](tel:01273325136)

[www.bemindfulonline.com](http://www.bemindfulonline.com)

Delivers mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) through a series of online modules.

### **Breathing Space**

Tel [0800 838 587](tel:0800838587)

[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

A free, confidential phone-based and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

## **Inspire**

Tel [0289 032 8474](tel:02890328474)

[www.inspirewellbeing.org](http://www.inspirewellbeing.org)

A network of emotional, psychological and social well-being support services throughout Northern Ireland.

## **Lifeline**

Tel [0808 808 8000](tel:08088088000)

Textphone **18001 0808 808 8000**

[www.lifelinehelpline.info](http://www.lifelinehelpline.info)

Crisis response service for people in distress or despair in Northern Ireland.

## **Mental Health Foundation**

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos)

Provides free well-being podcasts through its website. These include relaxation and mindfulness exercises.

## **Mind**

Helpline [0300 123 3393](tel:03001233393)

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Provides information, advice and support to anyone with a mental health problem through its helpline and website.

## **Rethink Mental Illness**

Tel [0808 801 0525](tel:08088010525)

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

Provides mental health advice and information by phone and through its website.

## **Samaritans**

Helpline [116 123](tel:116123)

Email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[www.samaritans.org](http://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.

## **General cancer support organisations**

### **Black Women Rising**

[www.blackwomenrisinguk.org](http://www.blackwomenrisinguk.org)

Aims to educate, inspire and bring opportunities for women from the BAME community. Shares stories and supports Black cancer patients and survivors through treatment and remission.

### **Cancer Black Care**

Tel [0208 961 4151](tel:02089614151)

[www.cancerblackcare.org.uk](http://www.cancerblackcare.org.uk)

Offers UK-wide information and support for people from Black and minority ethnic communities who have cancer. Also supports their friends, carers and families.

### **Cancer Focus Northern Ireland**

Helpline [0800 783 3339](tel:08007833339)

[www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org)

Offers a variety of services to people affected by cancer in Northern Ireland.

### **Cancer Research UK**

Helpline [0808 800 4040](tel:08088004040)

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://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](tel:08006524531)

[www.cancersupportscotland.org](http://www.cancersupportscotland.org)

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

### **Life after Cancer**

[www.life-aftercancer.co.uk](http://www.life-aftercancer.co.uk)

Runs support groups for people who have finished cancer treatment, to increase their physical, mental, emotional and social well-being.

### **Macmillan Cancer Voices**

[www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices](http://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**

Tel [0300 123 1801](tel:03001231801)

[www.maggies.org](http://www.maggies.org)

Has a network of centres in many 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](tel:03033000118)

[www.pennybrohn.org.uk](http://www.pennybrohn.org.uk)

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

### **Riprap**

[www.riprap.org.uk](http://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.

## **General health information**

### **Drinkaware**

[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

Provides independent alcohol advice, information and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking. Also has a web chat, for anyone concerned about their own drinking, or someone else's.

## **Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland**

[www.northerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net)

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

## **NHS.UK**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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

## **NHS 111 Wales**

[111.wales.nhs.uk](http://111.wales.nhs.uk)

The NHS health information site for Wales.

## **NHS Inform**

Helpline [0800 22 44 88](tel:0800224488)

[www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

The NHS health information site for Scotland.

## **Patient UK**

[www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

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

## **LGBT-specific support**

### **LGBT Foundation**

Tel [0345 330 3030](tel:03453303030)

[lgbt.foundation](http://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.

### **OUTpatients (formerly Live Through This)**

[www.outpatients.org.uk](http://www.outpatients.org.uk)

A safe space for anybody who identifies as part of the queer spectrum and has had an experience with any kind of cancer at any stage. Also produces resources about LGBTQI+ cancer experiences. Runs a peer support group with Maggie's Barts.

## **Support for carers**

### **Carers Trust**

Tel [0300 772 9600](tel:03007729600)

[www.carers.org](http://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 [0808 808 7777](tel:08088087777)

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Offers information and support to carers across the UK. Has an online forum and puts people in contact with local support groups for carers.



## 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 members of Macmillan's Centre of Clinical Expertise.

With thanks to: Dr Timothy Anstiss, Doctor and Trainer; Dr Alison Farmer, Clinical Nurse Specialist in Psycho-Oncology; Dr Kathrin Hicks, Clinical Psychologist; Matt Loveridge, Clinical Nurse Specialist; Dr Louise Robinson, Clinical Psychologist; Azmina Rose, Macmillan Cancer and Support Lead; and Dr Elizabeth Stamp, Lecturer in Health Psychology.

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

Below is a sample of the sources used in our information about cancer and emotions. If you would like more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **[cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)**

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).  
Common mental health problems: identification and pathways to care. Clinical guideline [CG123]. Published 25 May 2011.  
[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg123](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg123) [accessed November 2022].

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).  
Depression in adults: treatment and management. NICE guideline [NG222]. Published 29 June 2022. [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng222](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng222) [accessed November 2022].

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).  
Depression in adults with a chronic physical health problem: recognition and management. Clinical guideline [CG91].  
Published 28 October 2009 [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg91](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg91) [accessed November 2022].

## Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It is just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer.

They are 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 are here 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

#### 1. Share your cancer experience

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

#### 2. 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.

#### 3. 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?

#### 4. Raise money

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

#### 5. Give money

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



## Please fill in your personal details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other

Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Please accept my gift of £  
(Please delete as appropriate)

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

OR debit my:

Visa / MasterCard / CAF Charity  
Card / Switch / Maestro

Card number

Valid from

Expiry date

Issue no

Security number

Signature

Date / /

## Do not 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 would rather donate online go to [macmillan.org.uk/donate](http://macmillan.org.uk/donate)



**This booklet is for people who have had cancer treatment. You might find it helpful if you are still having treatment. It describes some of the feelings you may have and suggests things to help you cope.**

---

We hope it helps you to know that your feelings are natural and that there are ways of dealing with them.

At Macmillan, we give people with cancer everything we've got. If you are diagnosed, your worries are our worries. We will help you live life as fully as you can.

For information, support or just someone to talk to, call [0808 808 00 00](tel:08088080000) or visit [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.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, interactive PDFs, easy read, Braille, large print and translations.

To order these, visit [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call our support line.

---

Trusted  
Information  
Creator



Patient Information Forum



**“ I called the Macmillan Support Line. It was Jenny who I spoke to the most and she was lovely. Jenny helped me get through the emotions I was feeling and made me feel like I was sane. ”**

Sarah, diagnosed with thyroid cancer