

How are you feeling?

The emotional effects of cancer



About this booklet

Having cancer affects all areas of your life, including the way you feel. This booklet is about some of the emotions that many people with cancer have. This may be after diagnosis, during treatment or after treatment has ended. We hope you find this booklet helpful in dealing with some of the feelings you may have. There are also suggestions of things to help you cope.

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.

At the [end of the booklet](#), there are details of other organisations that can help.

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. This includes Lizzy, who is on the cover of this booklet. Some are from people who have chosen to share their story with us. 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**, 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**.

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Cancer and your feelings

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How are you feeling?

If you have cancer, you may have to deal with things that frighten and challenge you. Many people feel overwhelmed when they are told they have cancer. But there is no right or wrong way to feel.

Common thoughts and fears about cancer include the following:

- I do not want to lose my independence and freedom.
- I do not want people to treat me differently.
- I am worried about my job.
- I may have to make changes to my lifestyle.
- I am worried about money.
- Will I die?

These are likely to be very real concerns for you and the people who care about you. It is fine to worry about these things or be upset by them. And it is fine to cry and say how you feel when things are difficult.

People have different reactions and emotions at different times. You may have sudden changes in your mood and feelings. You may have these feelings at any time after your cancer diagnosis.

Your feelings

It is common to have many different emotions when you are told you have cancer. These can be difficult to cope with. We talk about some common feelings here. Partners, family and friends may also have some of the same feelings.

There are lots of different reactions to cancer. You might not have any of the emotions we talk about here. There is no right or wrong way to feel. You will cope with things in your own way.

[Talking to family or friends](#) may help. You may also find it helpful to talk to other people affected by cancer. Or you may get [support from your healthcare team](#).

Shock and denial

You may find it hard to believe that you have cancer when you are first diagnosed. It is common to feel shocked and numb. You may not be able to understand all the information you are given. You may find that you keep asking the same questions.

At first, it can be hard to talk about the cancer. Or you might find it hard to think or talk about anything else. Both reactions are normal. Your mind is trying to process what is happening. These feelings usually get easier over time.

Fear and anxiety

You may be anxious or frightened about whether treatments will work and what will happen in the future. This can be one of the hardest things to cope with. It can help to try to focus on things you can control.

You may want to find out more about the cancer, your treatment options and how to manage any side effects. It can also help to [talk about your feelings](#). Try to keep doing the things that are important to you and that you enjoy.

Sadness and depression

You may feel sad if you have to change your plans because of the cancer, or if your future feels uncertain. Feeling sad is a natural reaction to change or loss.

This feeling may come and go during and after your treatment. For most people, these periods of sadness get better. But for some people, the sadness may continue or get worse. If you think the sadness may be turning into depression, there are [things you can do to help](#).

Avoidance

You may cope by trying not to find out much about the cancer. Or you may cope by not talking about it. If you feel like this, tell people that you do not want to talk about it right now. You can also tell your cancer doctor if there are [things you do not want to know or talk about yet](#).

Sometimes it may be hard to accept that you have cancer. This can stop you making decisions about treatment. If this happens, it is very important to get help from your healthcare team.

You may feel that your family or friends are avoiding you or avoiding talking about the cancer. This is usually because they are also finding it difficult to cope. They may need support too. Try to tell them how this makes you feel. It may help you, your family and friends talk openly about how you are feeling.

Anger

You may feel angry about your diagnosis. You may also resent other people for being well. These are normal reactions. They are more likely when you feel frightened, stressed or unwell. You may get angry with your family, friends or partner. Tell them you are angry at your illness and not at them.

[Finding ways to relax](#) can help with anger. This can include talking about or writing down how you feel, doing gentle exercise, having relaxation therapy or meditating.

Guilt and blame

You may feel guilty or blame yourself for the cancer. You may want to find reasons for why it has happened to you. Most of the time, it is impossible to know exactly what causes a cancer. Over time, a combination of different risk factors may cause a cancer. Doctors do not fully understand all these factors yet. Try to focus on taking care of yourself and getting the help and support you need.

You may feel guilty that the cancer will affect other people in your life. You may worry that they will find it difficult to cope. Try to talk to them about this. It can be helpful for all of you to be open about your feelings.

Feeling alone

You may feel alone or isolated. This could be because you do not think you have support. Family and friends may live far away, be busy or feel uncomfortable talking about the cancer. Try to tell your family and friends how you feel. This can help them find ways to support you.

You may have times when you want to be alone for a while. But if you find you are avoiding people a lot of the time, try to talk to your doctor or nurse.

If you need more support, you can call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00** and talk to one of our cancer support specialists.

Our website can help you find local support groups.

Visit [macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups)

You can also talk to other people affected by cancer on our Online Community at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)

Uncertainty

We all like to know what is going to happen to us. It helps us feel secure about the future. Your feelings can change when you are told you have cancer. You might be worried about how cancer treatment will affect you. You might be anxious about whether it will work. Your future may feel uncertain, and this can be frightening.

You may find yourself asking some of these questions:

- What happens now?
- How will I feel during my treatment?
- Will I ever get back to how I was before?
- Will I be able to go back to work after treatment?
- Will I be able to get pregnant or get someone pregnant?
- Will the cancer come back? If so, when?

Uncertainty can be stressful. You might find it difficult to make plans when you are not sure about the future.

Coping with uncertainty

If you are finding uncertainty hard to live with, try taking control of the things you can do something about. Getting back into a routine will help. Over time, you will be able to do more of your usual activities.

You might decide to make changes to your diet or other areas of your life (see [Focusing on your health](#)). You may want to try [complementary therapies](#) to help you relax and cope with stress.

You may find it helpful to know that other people have the same kinds of feelings as you (see [Self-help and support groups](#)).

Do feelings affect cancer?

Cancer is influenced by many things, including our environment, diet, genetics and physical health. Your feelings can affect the way you cope with cancer and treatment. But there is no evidence that these things affect the cancer itself.

There is no evidence that feeling anxious or sad can affect your recovery. It is normal to have these feelings during difficult times. Talking about them openly and getting the right support can help. It can help you feel more in control.

You can call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00** or find local support. You can also ask your cancer doctor, specialist nurse or GP for advice and help getting support.

If you identify as LGBTQ+

If you identify as LGBTQ+, you may have additional worries. You may have questions about whether this will affect your cancer treatment. Sexual orientation and gender identity should not affect access to the right healthcare. Your healthcare team should offer the care, support and information that meet your needs.

People who identify as LGBTQ+ may face extra challenges in getting the right help and support. This may be when you go to hospital appointments or when you are talking to your healthcare team.

You might be worried that professionals will make assumptions about you. It can be hard to know how to deal with this. You might want to talk to your healthcare team about your sexual and romantic orientation and gender identity. But you do not have to give them this information if you do not want to.

We have more information about talking to your healthcare team when you identify as LGBTQ+ in our booklet [LGBTQ+ people and cancer](#).

If you have a partner, the cancer may make your relationship public for the first time. Being open about it with your healthcare team may make it easier for your partner to go to appointments with you. You may both feel more supported if other people know about your relationship.

If you or your partner are not getting the support you need, it is important to remember that the law protects you. You should not be treated any differently because of how you identify.

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Sometimes, talking about these issues can help you cope. There are [organisations](#) that can offer support.

You can also call us on **0808 808 00 00**. Our cancer support specialists are experts in supporting anyone who is affected by cancer.

Or you could talk to people in the LGBTQIA+ group on our Online Community. Visit macmillan.org.uk/community

We have more information for people with cancer who identify as LGBTQ+ at macmillan.org.uk/lgbtq-cancer



Advanced cancer

If your cancer doctor has told you the cancer is advanced, you may feel shocked and find it hard to accept. You may feel frightened, angry, or worried about the future.

With time, these feelings can become more manageable. Some people find that making plans and decisions helps them feel more in control.

Some people live with advanced cancer for a long time. During this time, many people carry on with their daily lives and do things that are important to them.



Talking about cancer

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Talking and getting support

Many people find it helpful to talk about cancer and how it is affecting them. You may find the idea of talking uncomfortable. But talking to someone about how you feel can help you cope with your emotions. It is often the first step in helping you feel better.

Talking about things can make you feel supported. It can also help you make decisions that are right for you.

“ Slowly, positive effects have become noticeable. People have started mentioning that I am oozing confidence, and I am beginning to emerge from my cocoon. ”

Lizzy

You may want to talk to someone you know well. This could be a partner, family member or friend.

Or you may find it easier to talk to someone you do not know well. This could be:

- your cancer doctor
- your GP
- your specialist nurse
- 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.

You might find self-help groups or online communities useful. This can be a good option if you find it hard to talk to your partner, family members or friends.

You can also speak to one of our cancer support specialists on **0808 808 00 00** (7 days a week, 8am to 8pm).

How talking can help

There are a few ways that talking may help you:

- You may feel more supported and less anxious. Knowing someone else understands and cares can reassure you that you are not alone.
- It can help you understand your feelings. When you keep everything inside, your thoughts often feel confusing. Talking can make your thoughts clearer.
- Having a lot of concerns can feel overwhelming. Talking can ease the pressure and make you feel better.
- Having someone listen to you without judging can reassure you that your thoughts are normal.
- Talking puts things into perspective. The more you worry about something, the worse it can seem. It can be a big relief to say your feelings out loud.
- Talking can help you process how you are feeling. This can help you make important decisions. When you have to make decisions, you often think you know what other people are thinking or feeling. But they may surprise you with their views, and help you to make tough decisions.

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 because you feel like 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 on **0808 808 00 00**.

Asking for support

Talking to another person is often the first step to getting the support you need. You may find it helpful to:

- tell the person that you want to talk about the cancer – this lets them know that they should listen
- think about what is most important to you – you may find it difficult to focus at first because there is a lot on your mind, but try to focus on a few important things
- write down what is worrying you so you can stay focused
- start by saying something general, such as, 'I am worried about how things are at the moment'
- ask if the other person understands what you are saying
- note any actions you both agree to take, and mention these again at the end of the conversation
- remember that it is okay to chat about other things too – you do not have to talk about serious issues all the time, and chatting about everyday things can help.

We have a tool you can use to write down the kind of support you need. Sharing this with people you trust may help them support you in the way you need.

[This tool](#) is taken from thinkaboutyourlife.org which was developed by people with cancer. We have more of these tools, which we hope you find useful (see [Relationship map](#) and [Write down your feelings](#)). We have put in some examples of ways you can use them.

At this time	When I say or do	It means	And I want you to
Any time	When my answers are short or abrupt	I do not want to talk about something	Text me, or wait for me to call

If you do not want to talk

There may be times when you do not feel like talking. You may just want to be on your own. Do not feel that you have to talk to people.

If you feel like this, let other people answer your door or phone for you. If you are in hospital, you may want to limit the number of visitors you have. You can ask a family member or the nurses to help you with this. You could also ask a trusted friend or family member to let other people know how you are. This might limit unwanted visitors, calls or messages.

We have more information about talking to people about cancer in our booklet [Talking about cancer](#). We also have information for family and friends in our booklet [Talking with someone who has cancer](#).

You can order our booklets and leaflets for free.

Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.







Managing anxiety and depression

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Dealing with change

Feeling like we have control over our lives makes us feel secure. It allows us to enjoy things and make plans for the future. Being diagnosed with cancer can take away that feeling of security. Not knowing what might happen can make you feel irritable, angry or frightened.

You may find that doctors cannot answer all your questions, or you may be unsure what the answers mean. For example, it is often impossible for them to say how well a treatment will work. Doctors may know the statistics for how many people will benefit from a treatment. But they cannot predict how it will affect you.

Many people find this uncertainty hard to cope with. We have tips for things you can do to help you manage your feelings.

Anxiety

Feeling anxious is a natural reaction when you have or have had cancer. It may come and go depending on what is happening at the time.

If anxiety is affecting your daily life, you may need extra help and support. You can talk to your GP, cancer doctor or specialist nurse.

Symptoms of anxiety include:

- racing thoughts
- finding it hard to concentrate
- feeling irritable, jumpy or restless
- sleep problems
- changes in appetite
- a constant feeling of dread or panic
- feeling like you are not connected to things happening to you or around you (dissociation).

If you are anxious, you may also notice physical symptoms such as:

- breathing quickly or heavily
- feeling faint, dizzy or shaky
- feeling hot and sweaty
- a dry mouth
- feeling very tired
- a tummy ache and feeling sick.

Other people telling you everything will be okay can make anxiety worse. You may feel that they are not listening, or they do not understand your worries.

Managing stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety are normal reactions to difficult life events. But living with stress and anxiety can be hard. There are things you can do to help manage your stress. You may want to try:

- talking to someone – this may be your friend, partner, family member, doctor, nurse, or a professional counsellor or psychologist
- focusing on your breathing – breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose and slowly out through your mouth
- practicing [mindfulness](#) – paid apps such as Headspace ([headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com)) and Calm ([calm.com](https://www.calm.com)), and free apps such as Healthy Minds Program (hminnovations.org/meditation-app) can help
- closing your eyes and listening to your surroundings, or to music
- moving, especially outdoors – even a short walk can help with anxiety
- carrying on with your hobbies and interests, if you can
- keeping a diary or journal – this can help you recognise things that trigger your anxiety
- [complementary therapies](#) such as yoga, meditation, massage or reflexology.

We have more information in our booklet [Cancer and complementary therapies](#) and at [macmillan.org.uk/complementary-therapies](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/complementary-therapies)

Feeling stressed or anxious are normal emotions if you are dealing with cancer. If you feel your anxiety is getting worse, speak to:

- your GP
- your specialist nurse
- a psychologist or counsellor.

They can help you find ways of coping with it. Some people with anxiety also have [depression](#). Speaking to your healthcare team is the best way to get the help you need.

You may find it helpful to contact [Anxiety UK](#). You may also find that it helps to join a [support group](#). We have more information on talking therapies at [macmillan.org.uk/talking-therapies](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/talking-therapies)



Sadness and depression

When you have cancer, you may feel sad at times. This might be at diagnosis, or during or after treatment. This feeling may come and go depending on what is happening at the time. This is a normal reaction. For most people, feelings of sadness might lessen or go away. But for some people, a low mood may continue or get worse.

When a low mood persists for weeks or months, it can be a sign of depression. Depression is common and can be caused by different things. It might be because of cancer or other things happening in your life. It might be caused by a combination of both. Some cancer treatments can affect your mood.

If you have had depression before, it might be a good idea to let your cancer team know so that they look out for changes in your mood. That may help you speak more openly about your feelings with them and help them support you better.

“ I woke up the next morning bawling my eyes out. I just wanted to get the feelings out of my system. I called my friend every night. ”

Lara, diagnosed with breast cancer

Symptoms of depression

It can be difficult to know if you are depressed. Sometimes other people notice your symptoms and suggest that you might need help.

Symptoms of depression can be physical or psychological. They can also affect how you feel around other people (social).

The psychological symptoms of depression include:

- feeling low or sad most of the time
- feeling hopeless and helpless
- finding it difficult to make decisions
- not getting any enjoyment out of life
- feeling anxious or worried
- having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself.

The physical symptoms of depression include:

- moving or speaking more slowly than usual
- changes in appetite or weight
- unexplained aches and pains
- lack of energy
- low sex drive (loss of libido)
- sleep problems.

The social symptoms of depression include:

- avoiding contact with friends and taking part in fewer social activities
- losing interest in your hobbies and interests
- having difficulties in your home, work or family life.

The symptoms of depression will be different for each person. The cancer or its treatment can also cause many of these symptoms, especially the physical ones.

Remember, it is normal to have some of these feelings at times. But if they go on for more than a couple of weeks, talk to your cancer doctor, GP or specialist nurse.

If you have any thoughts about self-harm or suicide, you should contact your cancer doctor, GP or specialist nurse straight away.

When a doctor asks you about your symptoms, they will consider how long you have had them and how much they are affecting your life. This can help them to diagnose depression. They might describe depression as mild, moderate or severe.

There are no physical tests for depression, but your doctor might do some blood tests. They may check your hormone levels or a blood cell count. This can help rule out other causes for some symptoms.



Coping with depression

It is important to remember that depression is common and that there are things that can help. There are many ways to cope and different types of support. The first step to feeling better is getting help.

Self-care, talking therapies or medication can all help.

Self-care

If you are sad or depressed, there are things you can do that may help. These include:

- being kind and gentle to yourself (self-compassion)
- getting enough sleep
- eating well
- keeping active
- getting outdoors
- doing things that you enjoy
- being with people you like.

When your mood is low, it can be hard to make the effort to do these things. Even small tasks may feel very difficult. Try to do 1 small thing at a time and celebrate your successes.

Getting help with depression

If you think you might have depression, speak to your GP. They can talk with you about your feelings and help you find ways to cope.

They may:

- give you a diagnosis, such as depression or anxiety
- talk to you about online support, such as websites and apps
- direct you to local support groups
- refer you to another service, such as a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist
- give you details of a talking therapy service you can contact yourself
- talk to you about medication
- put you in touch with local exercise schemes.

These things may not happen at the first appointment. Your doctor may give you a questionnaire to fill in first. They will want to know more about:

- how you are feeling
- how your feelings are affecting you
- any treatments you have tried.

They ask these questions so they can work out the best way to help you. This may take time.

They may suggest ways of managing the depression, including talking therapies, medication or a combination of both. Exercise can also help your mood if you have depression. Sometimes a GP can refer you to a free or reduced-cost exercise programme.

If you are in crisis or having suicidal feelings, you can go to your local A&E (emergency department), or call **999** and ask for an ambulance. Or you can call Samaritans on **116 123** at any time of the day or night.

You can call also the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00** (between 8am and 8pm daily) so they can direct you towards services that can help.

Suicidal feelings

Suicidal feelings can be a reaction to emotions that you cannot cope with. Some people who are very depressed feel they are a burden to other people. They may feel that their loved ones would be better off without them.

Often, people who feel this way believe no one can help them. This is not true.

It is very important to talk to someone. This could be your doctor, someone in your healthcare team, your therapist or a helpline. They can arrange specialist help for you.

Talk to someone if you have:

- thoughts about hurting yourself
- thoughts about killing yourself
- other symptoms you are worried about.

Specialist nurses and doctors can support you and help you feel better as quickly as possible. In some areas, specialist psychiatric support teams can visit you at home.

If you cannot contact anyone or get help, call **999** or go to your local Accident and Emergency department (A&E).

Samaritans has a 24-hour confidential helpline that provides support. Call **116 123**.



Getting help

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How to get help

If you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, or you are becoming anxious or depressed, it is important to get help. Different people can help you find support, such as:

- your healthcare team at the hospital
- your GP
- online self-help services
- local charities and organisations that offer counselling
- private clinics offering therapy services.

If you have private health insurance, it may cover the cost of mental health support.

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. It is okay to get upset and to show your feelings. 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 look at 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 on 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** (Monday to Friday, 1pm to 9pm) 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](https://www.nhs24.scot) 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** 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://www.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.



Online services

Online services are available to support people with mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. You can use these on a computer, smartphone or tablet. For some people, this can be just as helpful as face-to-face therapy.

You may be able to use online services for free on the NHS. You can ask your GP or someone in your healthcare team about it. Or you can contact the services yourself. If they are not available on the NHS in your area, you may be able to pay for the services.

To find out more, visit [nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/self-help-therapies](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/self-help-therapies)

Local charities and organisations

There are local counselling centres run by charities or counsellor training schools. These may offer support by phone, by email, or face-to-face through local support groups. You can also search online for low-cost counselling in your area.

Private clinics

Private therapists can often see you straight away. They can be expensive, but many offer lower rates if you are on a low income. Private therapy is useful if you:

- want a certain type of talking therapy
- need quick access to treatment
- want to continue therapy for longer than you can on the NHS.

You can find a private therapist through the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](https://www.bacp.co.uk/).

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 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:

- one-to-one 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 at 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 our support line on **0808 808 00 00** 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** or the Samaritans on **116 123** at any time of the day or night.

Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00** (between 8am and 8pm daily) so they can direct you towards services that can help.

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 for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#).

Support from hospices

Your specialist nurse or hospital doctor may refer you to a hospice for support.

Some hospices can help anyone with cancer or other long-term illnesses. Some can offer psychological support and complementary therapies, such as massage and reflexology, as well as symptom control. The care is free, and it may help you relax and manage your stress better.

You do not always have to stay in the hospice. You can visit for day therapy. This gives you the chance to meet people going through similar experiences. It can also give your family or carers some time for themselves.



Anti-depressant medicines

Your doctor may prescribe an anti-depressant drug for you. There are different types of anti-depressants. Your doctors may need to try more than 1 to find which suits you best.

It can take up to 4 weeks after you start treatment for you to feel the benefits. Your doctor will monitor how well they are working for you.

Most people need to take anti-depressants for at least 6 months to help them through their depression. Anti-depressants are not addictive, but you should not stop taking them suddenly. This can cause withdrawal symptoms. When you stop taking anti-depressants, it is important to follow your doctor's advice.

Side effects

Like all other drugs, anti-depressants can cause side effects. These are different for each drug and for each person. Ask your doctor to explain what the possible effects are. You can also read the leaflet that comes with the anti-depressant. This will tell you what to expect. Tell your doctor about any side effects you have.

It is important to follow your doctor's instructions when taking anti-depressants. Tell them about any other health conditions you have or other medicines you are taking. Some anti-depressants can react with other medicines.

You can read more about anti-depressants on the [Mind](#) website.

St John's wort

St John's wort is a herbal treatment. It can react with other medicines, including cancer treatments. This can make them less effective.

If you are thinking of taking St John's wort, it is important to speak to your doctor first.



Feelings and physical symptoms

Physical symptoms and your emotions

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Physical symptoms and your emotions

Your physical symptoms can affect your emotions. Emotional symptoms can also affect you physically.

You may notice changes in your energy, sleep, appetite and sex drive. These changes might be caused by your cancer or cancer treatment, but your feelings can affect them too.

Pain

When you have pain, it can affect your mood. Pain can also make you feel anxious. Anxiety and depression can affect how we feel pain and our ability to cope with it.

We have more information about managing pain, with and without drugs, at [macmillan.org.uk/pain](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/pain) and [macmillan.org.uk/pain-management-without-drugs](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/pain-management-without-drugs)

Getting emotional support may help you manage pain. Other things that may help include [mindfulness, meditation and relaxation techniques](#). It is important to talk to your healthcare team about any pain so that they can help and support you.

Fatigue

Fatigue is extreme tiredness or exhaustion. It is a common side effect of cancer and cancer treatments. Fatigue can affect your mood. It can stop you doing the things you enjoy. But it can also be caused by anxiety and [depression](#).

This can make it difficult to know the cause. If you think anxiety or depression could be adding to your fatigue, speak to your GP or healthcare team. They can advise and support you.

We have more information in our booklet [Coping with fatigue \(tiredness\)](#). Or visit macmillan.org.uk/fatigue



Sleep problems

If you have cancer, you may find it difficult to sleep. You may have worries about treatment or fears about the future. Some medicines, such as steroids, can affect your sleep. Not getting enough sleep can affect your well-being and ability to cope.

Sleep hygiene is a term used to describe things you can do during the day that may help you sleep better at night. Sleep hygiene tips include:

- doing gentle exercise, like walking
- keeping your mind busy with reading, games or puzzles
- avoiding large meals and caffeine in the evening
- going to bed and getting up around the same time each day to get your body into a sleep pattern
- having a warm bath or shower
- making sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and as comfortable as possible
- getting up and going to another room if you cannot sleep
- reading or listening to music until you feel tired
- writing down worries that are keeping you awake so you can talk to someone about them later.

Sleepio is an app that you can access for free if you have cancer (sleepio.com). It uses guided cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques to help improve your sleep.

Relaxation CDs, apps or podcasts can also help you get to sleep. We have meditation and relaxation audio files and videos at learnzone.org.uk/courses

We have more information at macmillan.org.uk/trouble-sleeping

Loss of interest in sex

Cancer and its treatment may cause you to lose interest in sex. Cancer may lead to changes in your body, or how you think about your body (body image). These changes may affect your sex life.

Losing interest in sex may affect your mood or cause you worry and anxiety. We have more information in our booklets [Sex and cancer](#) and [Body image and cancer](#). You can also find more information online at macmillan.org.uk/body-image and macmillan.org.uk/sex-and-cancer

Reduced interest in sex is also a common symptom of feeling depressed or anxious.

It can feel difficult to talk about sex. If you have a partner, you can explain that your lack of interest in sex does not mean you have lost interest in them. This may help you both feel more secure.

62 [How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer](#)

It may help to discuss your feelings with a trained counsellor or psychologist. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the charities [Relate](#) and [Relate NI](#) provide relationship counselling. They also offer support by phone and online. In Scotland, you can contact [Relationships Scotland](#).

OUTpatients supports LGBTQ+ people with cancer, and the LGBT Foundation also offers couples counselling.

You can search the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#) website for a trained therapist who specialises in sexual problems.

You can also talk to your GP, cancer doctor or specialist nurse. They can look at your treatments to see if they can make changes that might help. They may also be able to refer you to a specialist.

You can call Macmillan's cancer support specialists on **0808 808 00 00**.

Changes in appetite

Changes in appetite, eating habits and weight can have an impact on your mood. Feeling anxious or depressed can also affect your appetite.

We have more information in our booklets [Eating problems and cancer](#), [Healthy eating and cancer](#) and [The building-up diet](#).

These give advice on:

- healthy eating
- making changes to your diet
- coping with eating problems or weight changes caused by cancer or its treatment
- eating when you do not feel hungry or do not need to gain weight.

Panic attacks

A panic attack is a sudden feeling of intense panic or fear. It causes mental and physical symptoms. They can feel very strong and unpleasant.

It is natural to feel panic or fear in a stressful or dangerous situation. But a panic attack can happen for no obvious reason.

Symptoms can include:

- a pounding or racing heartbeat
- feeling very hot or cold
- sweating or shaking
- feeling sick (nausea) or needing the toilet
- feeling faint, dizzy or lightheaded
- feeling unable to breathe properly
- chest or stomach pains
- numbness, pins and needles, or ringing in your ears
- feeling like you are not connected to your body (dissociation).

How to cope with a panic attack

Panic attacks are frightening, but there are ways to help control them. Talking therapies can help you manage panic attacks. We have more information at [macmillan.org.uk/talking-therapies](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/talking-therapies)

If you see a counsellor or psychologist, tell them you had a panic attack. They can try to work out how to help you. You can also talk to your healthcare team. They may be able to give you information about things that you can try.

There are also many self-help resources available. Your doctor or nurse may be able to tell you more about these.

Tell your family and friends you have had a panic attack in case it happens again. There are practical ways to manage them, such as breathing exercises and visualisation.

If you have a panic attack, there are things you can try:

- Stay where you are. If you are driving, stop the car.
- Do not fight it. Tell yourself it is a panic attack and that it will go soon.
- Focus on your breathing. It can help to concentrate on breathing slowly while counting to 5.
- March on the spot. Some people find that this helps control their breathing.
- Practice grounding techniques. Focus on things you can see, hear, touch or taste. This can help you feel in control.



Relationships and work

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If you have a partner

Being diagnosed with a serious illness can be difficult for you. If you have a partner, it can also affect them.

Make time to talk and share your feelings. This can help you understand each other better and feel closer. If you find it difficult to talk with your partner, seeing a relationship counsellor may help.

If you have become less interested in sex because of cancer or its treatment, we have more information about the help available in our booklet [Cancer and your sex life](#).

We also have more information about the impact cancer can have on relationships, and what may help, in our booklet [Cancer and relationships](#).

Family life

Looking after a family can be hard work, even when you are well. Managing family life and work as well as coping with cancer may seem impossible. It can also feel difficult to support other people when you need support yourself.

Be realistic about what you can manage. If you can, try to get help from your partner, family or friends. Think about which duties you can give up for a short time. This may help you concentrate on coping with the cancer.

Your family members may also find it difficult to cope with changes to family life. They may be frustrated that they have to do more. They may also feel guilty for feeling that way. They will have fears about the future. Try to create opportunities for you and your family to talk openly. Try to talk about your concerns and how you can support each other.

It may also be helpful to talk to someone outside the family, such as a good friend, health professional or trained counsellor. We have more information in our booklet [Talking about cancer](#).

If you are a parent

As a parent, you may not be able to do all the things you usually do for your children. This may feel difficult. It can help to save your energy for the most important things to you and your children.

Finding things you can do together that need less energy or can be done in short stints may also help – for example, reading, watching a film or playing board games and puzzles. Save more energetic activities for days when you feel well enough.

Talking to children about cancer

Deciding what to tell children about cancer is difficult. It can be hard to know what to tell them, and you may be worried about upsetting them. But they may imagine something worse than the reality, so it can help to be open and honest. Children do not always show their feelings, but their behaviour may change at home or at school.

Talking to children about the cancer can:

- help them understand what is going on
- help them feel supported
- prepare them for any changes.

“ We were really worried about how to approach the subject with our girls. My Macmillan nurse Maggie helped us with that. She spoke to us about what support resources were available that would make it easier for us and them. ”

Waheed, diagnosed with bone cancer

It may also help with some of your own anxiety. For example, not telling them about hospital appointments may cause extra stress.

How much you tell children will depend on their age and how mature they are. It may be best to start by giving them small amounts of information, and then tell them more when they are ready.

Teenagers

Teenagers usually understand what cancer is. Some may want to know more. It can help to give them time to think about what is happening. Let them know that once they have had time to think about things, it is okay to ask questions or give their opinion on things.

They may have to, or want to, take on more responsibilities to help. This might be cooking or looking after younger children. This can be hard at a time when they may want more freedom and independence.

Sometimes, teenagers may find it hard to talk about a cancer diagnosis. They might distance themselves and prefer to spend more time with their friends. It can seem as though they do not care, but it may be their way of coping with the situation.

You can encourage them to talk to someone they trust, who can support and listen to them. This might be a grandparent, family friend, teacher or counsellor. They may also find support online.

The website riprap.org.uk offers information and support for teenagers who have a parent with cancer.

We have more information in our booklet [Talking to children and teenagers when an adult has cancer](#)

If you live alone

Living alone can add extra stress when you are coping with cancer. You may usually like being independent, but being ill may make you feel lonely and frightened.

It is okay to ask for help. If you can, ask your friends and family. People often want to help but do not know the best way to do this.

Some people may find it difficult to support you emotionally, but could help in practical ways. For example, they might be able to help you with shopping or household tasks.

You could make a list of practical things that need to be done. Then, if people offer to help but are not sure what to do, they can choose something from your list. Other people may be comfortable talking with you about how you are feeling. Talking with them can help you share your worries and fears.

If you do not have anyone who you can ask for help, [Marie Curie](#) has a free helper service in some parts of the UK. Someone can visit you to have a chat or just be there to listen. Or they can help you get to an appointment, do the shopping or help with household tasks.

Your GP, social worker or community nurse can also help. They can tell you what help and support is available from local health, social care and voluntary organisations.

Managing work

For some people, work is an important part of life. 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 treatment or illness at work. You may want to keep this part of your life separate from work. It might be a good way of coping for you.

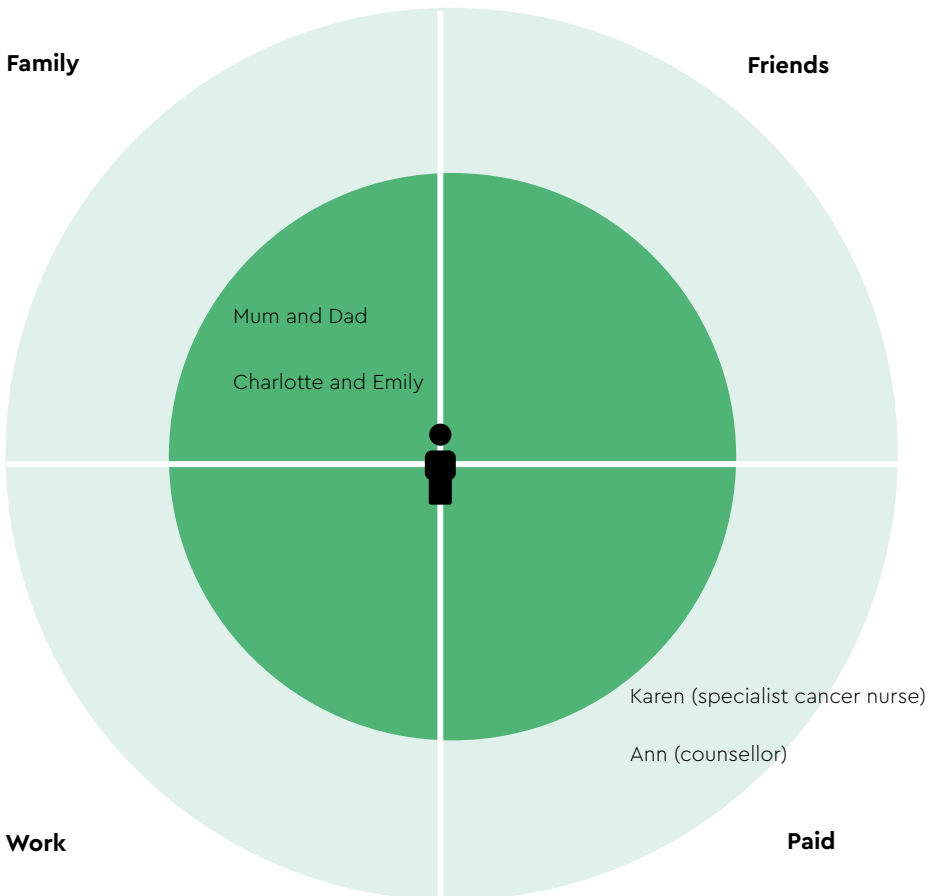
Going back to work after treatment can feel very different. Your priorities can change. You may want to consider working part time or returning to work slowly.

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



Relationship map

You can use our relationship map to help you see more clearly who is important in your life and who can help in different ways. You can write the names of the people you feel are closest to you in the inner circle on the map. The outer circle is for those who care about you and are in your life, but might not be able to offer emotional support.





Positive steps to help yourself

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Before treatment finishes

Knowing what to expect after treatment may help you adjust and feel more in control. You may want to talk to your specialist nurse or cancer doctor about:

- what to expect
- what you can do to improve your short-term and long-term recovery
- your follow-up plan, including how often any appointments or tests will be
- symptoms to look out for
- who you should contact if you are worried about any late effects of treatment.



It is important to go to your appointments. Tell your specialist nurse or cancer doctor about new or ongoing symptoms or side effects.

You may be offered a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) during treatment. This is where someone from your cancer team talks to you about your feelings and concerns.

These can be physical, emotional or practical concerns. They can then offer you the best advice and support. They may give you a personalised care and support plan. If you are not offered an HNA and would like one, you can ask someone from your healthcare team about it.

We have more information in our booklet [Holistic Needs Assessment: Planning your care and support](#).

You may also be offered a treatment summary. This describes the treatment you had and gives you information about follow-up appointments. A copy is sent to your GP.

We have more information about life after cancer treatment at [macmillan.org.uk/after-treatment](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/after-treatment)

Follow-up appointments and tests

After treatment, you may have follow-up appointments. Your cancer doctor or specialist nurse will ask you how you have been. They can also check any problems you are having or possible signs that the cancer has come back. If the cancer does come back, finding it earlier may make it easier to treat.

Follow-up appointments are also a chance to talk about any concerns you may have. You can always contact your healthcare team between appointments. If you are worried about anything, you do not need to wait for an appointment.

Rather than regular follow-up appointments, you might be asked to contact your specialist nurse or cancer doctor if you have any symptoms or concerns. Your healthcare team will talk to you about symptoms you should look out for.

Not having regular follow-up appointments may cause anxiety. Talk to your cancer doctor or specialist nurse if you are worried about this.

Get the most from your visit

At follow-up appointments or for telephone calls, it might be helpful if you:

- write a list of questions and things you want to talk about before the appointment
- bring someone with you for support
- bring something to do while you are waiting, such a book or a way to listen to music.

Sometimes it can be hard to remember everything you talked about during an appointment. You or the person with you might want to write notes during your visit. Or you can ask your doctor or nurse to write down the main points.

You could also ask if you can record the conversation so you can listen to it afterwards. You can check that you will receive a copy of the letter that gets sent to your GP.

You might want to take some time afterwards to discuss it with someone you feel comfortable with, such as a friend or family member. You could both plan to do something you enjoy.

If anything was not clear, ask the doctor or nurse to explain again. They will be happy to answer your questions and make you feel less worried. If they understand your concerns, they can offer you the right support. If you forget something or think of other questions, you can always contact them afterwards.

We have more information in our booklet [Ask about your cancer treatment](#)

Following advice

Your healthcare team may give you advice on what you can do to help your recovery.

If you have ongoing side effects from your treatment, your cancer team can explain how to manage these. They may show you how to do some simple checks for signs the cancer has come back. Or they may tell you about signs or symptoms to look out for. They may also give you advice on lifestyle factors, such as smoking, diet and being active.

You may be taking drugs to reduce the risk of the cancer coming back. If you are, it is very important to keep taking them. Talk to your healthcare team if you have any questions or concerns about ongoing treatment. They would rather know so they can best help and support you.

Always let your specialist nurse, cancer doctor or GP know about any side effects so they can help. They may be able to change the treatment to a different one. Your pharmacist can also offer help and support.

Taking control

Learning about the type of cancer you have and your treatment can make you feel more in control. It can help you make decisions and feel more involved in your care.

Having the right information can help when you speak with your healthcare team, family, friends or the people you work with. Talking openly helps people understand what is important to you.

Some people like to have a lot of information. Others just want the information they need at the time to make decisions. Tell your cancer team what you prefer. Everyone has their own ways of coping. It is okay to do what is best for you.

Getting the right information

There is a lot of information available online, in print and shared on social media. Some of this information can be wrong or misleading. This is called misinformation. There is a lot of misinformation about cancer and cancer treatment.

Ask your specialist nurse or cancer doctor where to find the best, most up-to-date information. You can always check details with your doctor or nurse. They can tell you whether it is reliable and relevant to you. When you are reading information, whether online or in print, it can help to look for the Patient Information Forum (PIF) Tick:



The PIF Tick means that the information is based on up-to-date evidence and follows strict guidelines.

Some health information videos on YouTube also have a blue panel beneath the video. These panels are applied to videos that have been identified as reliable sources of information. For example, videos from the NHS have the following blue panel beneath them:



From a UK national health authority

Learn how health sources are defined by the NHS [↗](#)

We have information in a range of formats about cancer, cancer treatments and living with cancer. You can order our information by visiting be.macmillan.org.uk or by calling our cancer support specialists on **0808 808 00 00**.

You can also go to a local Macmillan Information and Support Centre to talk to experts and trained volunteers. They can give you support and answer your questions. You can search for groups or Information and Support Centres near you by visiting macmillan.org.uk/inyourarea

Changing priorities

Cancer often causes people to think about their lives and their priorities. Some people make big changes to their lives, such as changing their job. Other people start a new hobby. Doing something new and different may help you feel better and more in control.



Focusing on your health

During and after cancer treatment, there are things you can do to improve your general health and well-being. Focusing on your well-being can help you feel involved in your care and recovery. As well as improving your physical health it may also support your mental health.

There are many benefits to being physically active and eating healthily. It can reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. It might reduce the risk of late effects such as heart and bone problems from some types of cancer treatment.

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.

Eating well 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.

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.

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 booklet [Healthy eating and cancer](#)

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 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 (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
- improve your bone health and help your heart and lungs
- reduce the risk of other health problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

Getting active with others can help, such as taking regular walks with family and friends or a walking group. You could ask your healthcare team about joining 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 cancer treatment and your bones in our booklet [Physical activity and cancer](#)



**“ Gardening really does
have so many benefits,
both physically and mentally. ”**

Lara, diagnosed with breast 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 they stay awake, often worrying about the same thing each night.

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, and avoid 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.

Sleepio (sleepio.com) is an app that you can access for free if you have cancer. It uses guided cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques to help improve your sleep.

We have more information at macmillan.org.uk/trouble-sleeping

Stop smoking

If you smoke, giving up 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 giving up 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
- a small glass (125ml) of wine
- a 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.

There is more information about alcohol and drinking guidelines on the Drinkaware website. Visit [drinkaware.co.uk](https://www.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 of them can affect your prescribed medication.

If you are worried about this, or you need help and support, talk to your doctor or nurse.



Self-help and support groups

Joining a self-help or cancer support group can have many benefits, including:

- 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.

What to expect at a support group

Each cancer support group is different. Some groups are made up of a few people who meet regularly at someone's house. Others are much larger and might have a meeting room.

You can expect a warm welcome from someone who has been in the group for some time. You will be introduced to other members and have the chance to tell them about yourself. You do not have to talk about anything you do not want to talk about. It can take a few visits before you feel comfortable enough to talk about personal things.

Most groups provide training in listening skills for group leaders. This means they will be able to listen in a positive, caring way. Meetings could include an activity, a social event or a talk from a guest speaker.

You may be able to access support services through the group. These might include complementary therapies, counselling or bereavement support. Most groups are free. Some may charge for tea and biscuits, or accept donations for any support services they offer.

Contact the organiser if you have questions about how the group works. They can tell you:

- what to expect
- how big the group is
- common discussion topics and activities.

How do I find a support group?

You can search for groups in your area by visiting macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups or by asking someone from your healthcare team. You can also call our cancer support specialists on **0808 808 00 00**.

[Life after Cancer](#) is an organisation that can help you find support groups after cancer treatment).

There may be more than 1 group in your area. You can try different groups to find one that works for you.

Other things you can do

There are lots of things you can try to help improve your physical and mental well-being.

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. Some people like to write down things that went well in their day.

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

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

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

Release tension

Tension can often be released by talking to people. We have more information about talking and the best ways to do this in our booklet [Talking about cancer](#)

Sometimes you may feel like everything is getting too much for you. If you feel this way, try to be kind to yourself. It might help to get outdoors, go for a long walk, play music, or hit a pillow or cushion. Crying can also help release emotions. These things will not do anyone any harm and they may make you feel much better.

You could also express yourself through drawing, painting, playing music or another creative hobby. You might want to try complementary therapies such as massage or other touch therapies or movement therapy, such as yoga. We have more information in our booklet [Cancer and complementary therapies](#) and at macmillan.org.uk/complementary-therapies

Make time to relax

One way of coping with stress is making time to relax. Doing things you enjoy and being with family or friends can help distract you from things you are worrying 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 massages.

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

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 – has a free mind plan along with tips to help deal with stress and anxiety at [nhs.uk/every-mind-matters](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters)
- [Mind](#) – courses are available throughout England and Wales
- Buddhist Centres – courses are available in England, Scotland and Wales – search online for 'buddhist centre near me'
- [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://www.bemindful.co.uk)

You can learn more by visiting [mentalhealth.org.uk/publications](https://www.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 on stress and anxiety at [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk). You might also find it helpful to visit [anxietyuk.org.uk](https://www.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.



Complementary therapies

Complementary therapies are used with, or as well as, conventional medical treatments. We have more information in our booklet [Cancer and complementary therapies](#) and at macmillan.org.uk/complementary-therapies

Conventional medical treatments are those used by doctors to treat cancer, such as chemotherapy. Complementary therapies do not claim that they can treat or cure cancer. People might use complementary therapies to improve their physical or emotional health. Or they may use them to reduce cancer symptoms or the side effects of cancer treatments.

There are many types of complementary therapies, including:

- mind-body therapies, such as yoga, meditation and hypnotherapy
- massage and other touch therapies, such as reflexology
- acupuncture
- therapies using herb and plants as a complementary remedy
- therapies using supplements or diet.

If you are thinking of using a complementary therapy, always check with your doctor. Some therapies have been scientifically tested to check how effective and safe they are, and if they have side effects. But it is often difficult to know how effective a complementary therapy is.

Some hospitals, hospices and support groups provide complementary therapies alongside cancer treatments such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

Some Macmillan Information and Support Centres offer free complementary therapies to people with cancer. Find your nearest Information and Support Centre at macmillan.org.uk/inyourarea

Practical tips to help you cope

It can help to take things 1 day at a time and not look too far ahead. Life might get easier to cope with over time. Having a routine can sometimes help. This might include:

- getting up and dressed every day
- eating healthily
- exercising regularly
- keeping to a regular sleeping pattern
- finding time for relaxation every day
- planning things you enjoy, so you have something to look forward to
- writing things down or making lists
- setting goals to work towards.

You can also ask other people for help. This may include:

- accepting offers of help and asking people for support
- staying in contact with your family and friends
- recognising when you are feeling stressed and asking your doctor for advice if you need to
- sharing your feelings with your family or friends, or with a professional
- talking to your doctor, nurse or dietitian if you have eating problems or a poor appetite.

The Mental Health Foundation also has information on how to look after your mental health at [mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)



Money and work

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Help with money and benefits

When you are affected by cancer, you may need help with extra costs. Or you may need support with money if you have to stop working. We have more information online about Statutory Sick Pay and benefits you may be entitled to. We also have [information for carers](#).

Benefits are payments from the government to people who need help with money. You can find out more about benefits and apply for them online. Go to:

- gov.uk if you live in England or Wales
- socialsecurity.gov.scot if you live in Scotland
- nidirect.gov.uk if you live in Northern Ireland.

The benefits system and other types of financial support can be hard to understand. Macmillan has experienced welfare rights advisers and financial guides. You can speak to them by calling the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**. Please note the opening times may vary by service.

You can also get information about benefits and other types of financial help from [Citizens Advice](#) if you live in England, Scotland or Wales, or [Advice NI](#) if you live in Northern Ireland.

Our booklet [Help with the cost of cancer](#) has lots more information.

Macmillan Grants

Macmillan Grants are small, one-off payments to help people with the extra costs that cancer can cause. They are for people who have a low level of income and savings.

If you need things like extra clothing or help paying heating bills, you may be able to get a Macmillan Grant. A grant from Macmillan does not affect the benefits you are entitled to. It is an extra bit of help, not a replacement for other support.

To find out more, or to apply, call on **0808 808 00 00** or visit macmillan.org.uk/grants

Insurance

If you have, or have had, cancer, you may find it hard to get certain types of insurance. We have information about insurance on our website. Visit macmillan.org.uk/insurance-cancer

If you are thinking about buying insurance or making a claim, one of our financial guides can help. You can call them on **0808 808 00 00**.

We have more information about travel insurance in our booklet [Travel and cancer](#). Our Online Community forum on Travel insurance may also be helpful. Visit macmillan.org.uk/community

Work

You may not know how cancer will affect your work, now or in the future.

It is a good idea to talk to your manager or human resources (HR) department soon after you are diagnosed. This will help them to support you better.

Some people stop working during cancer treatment and for a while after, until they feel ready to go back. Others carry on working, sometimes with reduced hours or other changes to their job.

Your cancer doctor, GP or specialist nurse can help you decide whether you should stop working, and when and if you should go back to work.

Our booklets [Work and cancer](#), [Working while caring for someone with cancer](#) and [Self-employment and cancer](#) have more information that may be helpful.

You can also find out more about your employment rights in our booklet [Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer](#).

There is also lots more information online at macmillan.org.uk/work





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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 booklets or leaflets like this one.

Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

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 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

If you would 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**.

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**. 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://www.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** 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 or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

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 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** 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

Work support

Our dedicated team of work support advisers can help you understand your rights at work. Call us on **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

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

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**

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**

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 'Therapist directory' page.

Relate

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

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**

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**

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**

Text **0753 741 6905**

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

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

Aware NI

Tel **028 9035 7820** (Belfast) or **028 7126 0602** (Derry/Londonderry)

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.

Breathing Space

Tel **0800 838 587**

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**

www.inspirewellbeing.org

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

Life after Cancer

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.

Lifeline

Tel **0808 808 8000**

Textphone **18001 0808 808 8000**

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

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

Mind

Helpline **0300 123 3393**

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**

www.rethink.org

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

Samaritans

Helpline **116 123**

Email **jo@samaritans.org**

www.samaritans.org

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

General cancer support organisations

Black Women Rising

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**

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**

www.cancerfocusni.org

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

Cancer Research UK

Helpline **0808 800 4040**

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**

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

Tel **0300 123 1801**

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.

Marie Curie

Helpline **0800 090 2309**

www.mariecurie.org.uk

Marie Curie nurses provide free end of life care across the UK. They care for people in their own homes or in Marie Curie hospices, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Penny Brohn UK

Helpline **0303 3000 118**

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

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

Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

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

NHS.UK

www.nhs.uk

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

NHS 111 Wales

111.wales.nhs.uk

The NHS health information site for Wales.

NHS Inform

Helpline **0800 22 44 88**

www.nhsinform.scot

The NHS health information site for Scotland.

Patient

www.patient.info

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

Financial support or legal advice and information

Advice NI

Helpline **0800 915 4604**

adviceni.net

Provides advice on a variety of issues including financial, legal, housing and employment issues.

Citizens Advice

Provides advice on a variety of issues including financial, legal, housing and employment issues. Use its online webchat or find details for your local office by contacting:

England

Helpline **0800 144 8848**

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Scotland

Helpline **0800 028 1456**

www.cas.org.uk

Wales

Helpline **0800 702 2020**

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales

LGBT-specific support

LGBT Foundation

Tel **0345 330 3030**

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.

OUTpatients (formerly Live Through This)

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. OUTpatients runs a peer support group with Maggie's Barts.

Support for carers

Carers Trust

Tel **0300 772 9600**

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**

www.carersuk.org

Offers information and support to carers in the UK. Has an online forum and can put 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**

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 [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 [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 [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





“ I wrote down achievements and new things tried and accomplished. I began to see that I was improving month on month. ”

Lizzy, diagnosed with oesophageal cancer

This booklet is about some of the emotions many people with cancer have. This may be after diagnosis, during treatment or after treatment has ended.

It includes information for carers, family members and friends. We hope you find this booklet helpful in dealing with some of the feelings you may have. There are also suggestions of things to help you cope.

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** 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.

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