

A practical guide to living
with and after cancer

YOUR FEELINGS AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

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'Some people feel that now most of the treatment is done, that I'm back to how I was. I wish. I'm just trying to listen to my body and rest.'

Bev

About this booklet

This booklet is for people who have finished the main part of their cancer treatment. It describes some of the feelings you may have and suggests what may help you cope with them.

People often expect to feel positive and relieved when they finish treatment. Your relatives and friends may also think life will just settle down again and go back to how it was before. But this may not always be the case. You may find yourself facing new challenges, side effects and mixed emotions.

Reactions differ from one person to another. We may not have covered all of the different emotions you may be feeling. But we hope it reassures you that these feelings are natural and that there are things that can help if you're finding them hard to cope with. It's important to remember that there's no right or wrong way to feel.

Your feelings after treatment can also affect partners, family members and friends. They may also want to read this booklet so they can be more aware of what you're going through and how to support you.

This booklet is also for you if you're having ongoing treatment to control your cancer or to prevent it returning. This may be biological therapy or hormonal treatment. Not everyone will have this, you may just be going for follow-up checks. Any ongoing treatment or appointments can affect how you feel and make it harder for you to get back into a routine.

In this booklet, we've included some comments from people affected by cancer. Some names have been changed. Some are from the online community at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community) Others are from videos on our website. You can find these videos at [macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformationvideos](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformationvideos)

We've also included some useful contact details and other organisations that can help on pages 43–49.

If you'd like to discuss this information, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. If you're hard of hearing, you can use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay. For non-English speakers, interpreters are available. Alternatively, visit [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)



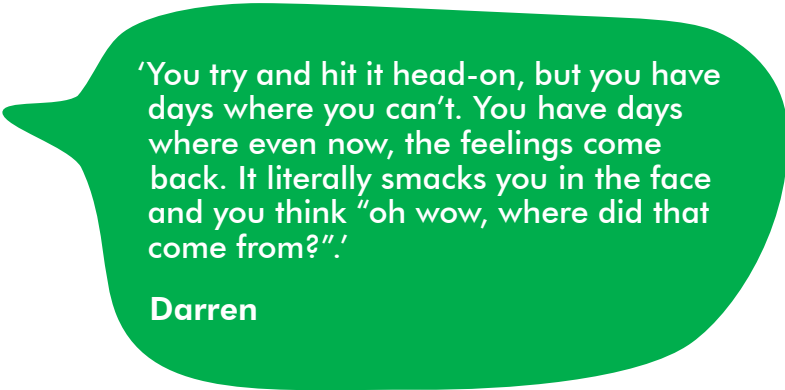
You may also want to read our booklet *Life after cancer treatment* and our leaflet *What to do after cancer treatment ends: 10 top tips*. They have more practical advice on how to cope when treatment is over.

Your feelings after treatment

Everyone's experience of cancer and how it affects their life can be different. Cancer can be life-changing, and many people feel that things will never be the same again when treatment is over.

You may not always stop feeling the physical or emotional effects of cancer just because you have finished treatment. You may be feeling a mixture of emotions including relief, fear, loneliness and anger. If your body has changed because of treatment, the way you feel about yourself may also be affected (see pages 22–26).

You may find these feelings come and go at different times. And some days they may feel stronger than others.



'You try and hit it head-on, but you have days where you can't. You have days where even now, the feelings come back. It literally smacks you in the face and you think "oh wow, where did that come from?"'

Darren

Many people find ways of coping with their emotions. You may find it easy to talk about how you feel and have people you can speak to. Some people often find that over time their feelings become easier to cope with. But it won't be like this for everyone. It can take time for everything to go back to normal, and this may not happen as quickly as you expect.

In some cases, things won't ever be the same as they were before. And if you had low moods or depression before you had cancer, you may find these problems are worse after treatment.

You may have more time to think and reflect on your illness and what you've been through. You may find feelings you weren't aware of suddenly come to the surface. Some people find they're still struggling to cope with their feelings weeks, months or even longer after their initial treatment has ended.

'This is actually one of the harder times. You get the shocking news that you've got cancer and get all gung-ho on the treatment, tests and appointments and then, you're better, and it all stops. As far as everyone else is concerned, you should be overjoyed. But you've suddenly lost the driving force behind your life for the best part of a year and it takes a while to live properly again and put it all behind you.'

Ian

Talking about your feelings can help you understand and manage them. This isn't always easy. We have some advice on putting your feelings into words on pages 28–30.



Feeling relieved and hopeful

Once the main part of your treatment is over, you may feel relieved. You don't have to visit the hospital as much and you can start to recover from the side effects of treatment. You may start to think about having a holiday, going back to work, or doing some of the regular things you used to do. These might be hobbies or just seeing friends. You may need to take it slowly at first but doing these activities again may help you feel better about yourself and your life.

You may have been encouraged to 'think positively' during your treatment. This may be something you hear even more after your treatment is over. But it's not always that easy. A lot of people have times where they feel low and this is natural. Being positive doesn't mean you have to feel happy all the time. It's a positive thing to acknowledge and talk about your feelings.

Some people feel a positive thing to come out of the cancer is a new outlook on life. You may feel like you can become a different person, stop or take on new work, change your lifestyle or do things you've always dreamed of. It can give you a greater appreciation of family, friends and life itself.

Uncertainty

Feeling that we have some control over our lives gives us a sense of security and allows us to enjoy the things we do. Having had cancer can take away your sense of security and control. This can be very frightening.

It's natural to want to know what is likely to happen to you, so that you can plan for the future. But at the end of treatment there can still be uncertainty, even when you've been told that everything has gone well.

You may find yourself asking some of these questions:

- What happens now?
- Will I ever get back to how I was before?
- Will I be able to go back to work?
- Will I be able to have children?
- Will the cancer come back and, if so, when?

For some people, their treatment may have been aimed at curing the cancer, so they hope that they can put it all behind them. Others may have been told that the cancer is likely to come back, but no one can say for sure if and when this will happen. Feeling worried about your cancer coming back is normal. We talk about these feelings a bit more on pages 11–12.

Uncertainty can cause a lot of tension. You may feel irritable, angry and frightened. It's difficult to make plans when you can't be sure about the future. And even if you ask your doctors what's likely to happen, you may find that their answers are vague because they can't say for certain.

If you're finding this uncertainty hard to live with, try taking control of the things you can do something about. Getting back into a routine will help. As you get your strength back, you'll be able to do more of your usual activities.

Making some changes to your diet (see page 31) or to your work-life balance can help. You may also want to think about using complementary therapies for relaxation and to reduce stress (see page 34).

You may find it helpful to know other people have the same kinds of feelings as you. We have a video on our website of Darren talking about how he coped with uncertainty. To watch it, visit [macmillan.org.uk/uncertainty](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/uncertainty)

Fear of your cancer coming back

After treatment, the biggest fear many people have is often about whether the cancer will come back. While you're having treatment, you know that something is being done to stop or slow the cancer. But when treatment is over, it can feel as though nothing's happening and the cancer could come back. If you have any aches or pains, even in a different part of your body, your first thought may be that it's something to do with the cancer.

'It does take time to readjust to everything. Not feeling around for lumps and bumps takes considerable willpower, especially on the run up to follow-ups. But be assured, it'll come.'

Ian

It's natural to feel afraid or anxious. You may feel like this all the time, or it may come and go. These feelings can be very strong and difficult to cope with. You may find you can't concentrate, are easily distracted, sleep badly or become irritable with others. People close to you may also have feelings of fear and anxiety. This can cause added stress when you're recovering.

As time goes on, most people become less worried that their cancer will come back. Getting on with activities not related to cancer can help.

You may find going back to the hospital for follow-up visits or tests difficult. It's normal to want to avoid situations that make you feel anxious or bring back difficult feelings. But it's not only the worry that eases over time, but the actual risk too. Many people feel reassured after follow-up visits.

But if you're worried about any unexplained symptoms, particularly any that last more than a week, talk to your GP or practice nurse. It probably won't be anything to do with the cancer, but you shouldn't be worried that you're bothering them by getting it checked out.



We have a leaflet called *Worrying about your cancer coming back*. It has more information to help you cope with your worries and fears.

If you find that your feelings of fear and anxiety aren't going away, you might want to think about getting professional help. This could be from your GP, your nurse specialist, a counsellor or a psychologist. Pages 36–37 have more information about this.

'I think one of my biggest fears is the fear of the cancer returning. I had counselling after treatment because I was feeling bewildered and abandoned.'

Edina

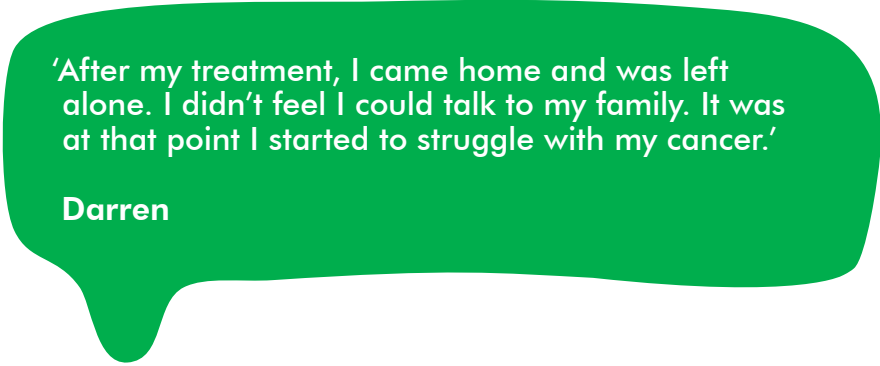


Isolation and feeling alone

It's very common for people with cancer to feel lonely and isolated. This isolation can affect people at different times during their illness. Sometimes this feeling stays after treatment ends.

There can be many reasons why you might feel alone. You may be coping with changes to your appearance which make you feel different from those around you. This could be because of weight loss or losing your hair (see pages 22–23). This can be hard to cope with, especially if the differences aren't obvious to everyone.

You may still feel lonely even if you're surrounded by family or friends, because it can seem like no one understands what you've been through. Many people feel they have to be brave and don't want to upset their family and friends.



'After my treatment, I came home and was left alone. I didn't feel I could talk to my family. It was at that point I started to struggle with my cancer.'

Darren

You may spend a lot more time on your own now. Your family and friends might not realise that you're feeling lonely, or they may assume that you're enjoying having time to yourself.

Some people may even feel a sense of grief or loss after treatment. This may be for the things you used to do but now can't keep doing. You may miss the routine of appointments, or the relationships you had with hospital staff. But some people find doing new things to fill the gaps can help, such as work or hobbies.

If you're back at work, you may feel isolated from your colleagues. This might be because you don't feel comfortable talking about your experiences, or because people avoid talking to you about it. If you don't normally work at home but you are at the moment, you may feel like you're missing out.



You may find it helpful to read our booklet *Work and cancer*, which talks about returning to work after treatment and gives advice on talking to colleagues about cancer. Or visit macmillan.org.uk/work

Feelings of isolation may be worse if you find it difficult to talk about yourself and your emotions. It can be hard to talk to others about how you really feel, especially if you sense that they think you should be able to get on with life now and 'feel fine'. You may tell them you're okay when you're not. You may find yourself giving people other reasons for not being yourself, such as 'I'm just feeling tired'.

Talking about it can help you feel less alone. You may think that your family and friends are too busy to chat, or worry that you might be a burden to them. But you may find their responses surprising and reassuring. Pages 28–30 have more information on what you can do to feel less isolated by telling people how you really feel.

Loss of confidence

Having cancer can make you feel vulnerable. Your life may have worked around hospital visits and getting support from hospital staff, friends or family members. After treatment ends, it can seem as though you've become dependent on others. This may make you feel like you have no control over your life.

Cancer and its treatments can change a person's role in their family or at work. Many people feel that these roles are an important part of their identity and if they change, it can affect their confidence.

Your social life often has to change after treatment. This can affect your confidence as you may not have the contact you once had with friends or colleagues. You can still feel tired and stressed after all you've been through, and the social things you used to do may be much more difficult.

It can take time for your strength to return. Some people have a loss of concentration too. This is sometimes called 'chemo brain'. Things you used to find easy may now be much more difficult, like reading a book or making small decisions. This can make you lose confidence in your abilities.

Getting back into these activities will take time. You'll probably build up your strength and confidence gradually. Setting yourself manageable goals can help. As you achieve these, your confidence will grow. Doing little things to reward yourself can help. This could be a trip to the cinema or doing something you enjoyed before you had cancer.

Depression

After treatment, you may be physically and emotionally exhausted. This might make you feel low at times. As you begin to get better and find you're able to get on with your life, these feelings will improve. For some people, their low mood can continue or get worse, and they may have depression.

But sometimes it's difficult to know if you are depressed or not. We've listed some of the symptoms of depression below. It's natural to have these kinds of feelings sometimes, but if they go on for more than a couple of weeks, you may want to think about talking to a professional (see pages 36–37).

Symptoms of depression can include:

- having very low moods most of the time
- not feeling like your usual self
- not being able to enjoy things like eating, socialising, hobbies or even your own company
- having problems sleeping or waking up early
- finding it hard to concentrate and being forgetful
- feeling helpless or hopeless
- feeling vulnerable or oversensitive
- a loss of motivation
- being unable to start or finish tasks.

Some people also have physical symptoms of depression, such as a dry mouth or a racing heart (palpitations). These may also be related to anxiety.

Depression can affect people of all ages. If you're a young person who has had cancer, you may also find yourself unsure of how to cope with the changing emotions you're feeling. You may feel it's not fair that life is carrying on for other people, and it's as though no one understands what you're going through. Feelings like these are natural and understandable, but it can be difficult to cope with them on your own.

Some people can sometimes feel guilty about feeling depressed, as they think they should just be grateful that they've completed the treatment. If you had depression during treatment, you may have assumed it would go away when you finished. But this isn't always the case and your life may have changed dramatically.

Coping with depression

It's important to remember that depression is common and that there are lots of things that can help.

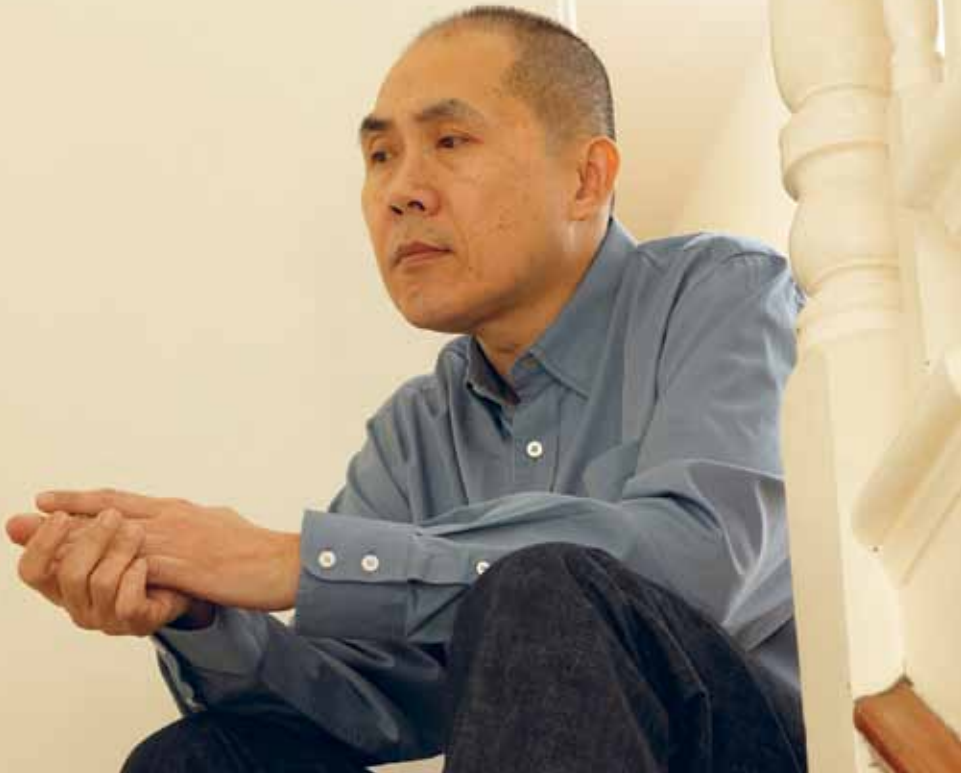
It's fine to still need help and support even though your treatment is over. There are many ways to cope with depression. What works for one person, may not work for another. For some, just talking about their feelings will help. Letting your family and friends know how you feel can help them support you. Or you could try talking to someone who has had similar feelings to you. This might be through a cancer support group or an online social networking site.

There's more information about things you can do help yourself on pages 28–34.

If you think you may need professional help, you can always talk to your GP or specialist nurse. Seeing a counsellor or psychologist can also be extremely useful. They can help you work out why you're feeling low, and what may help you. Pages 36–37 have some more advice on the type of professional help available.



We have more detailed information about how depression works on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/depression](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/depression) Here you can read more advice and watch a video of Alfie talking about how he has learnt to cope with his depression.



Anger

It's natural to feel angry when you've had cancer. You may feel angry about going through treatment and having to cope with the side effects. You may be angry about the impact the cancer has had on your life. It may have affected your ability to work, your relationships and family life. Anger can also hide other feelings, such as fear or sadness.

We all express our anger in different ways. Some people might be impatient, or raise their voice. Others may get very upset and tearful. You may often direct your anger at the people closest to you. Letting others know that your anger is not about them, but about your situation, can be helpful. It means you can express your feelings and not bottle them up.

Try not to feel guilty about your angry thoughts or irritable moods. Anger can be a very powerful emotion, and you may find you can use it in a more positive way. It may give you the determination to start something new. This could be something like starting a new hobby or signing up to a sports challenge. Or these feelings may help you clarify what's important in your life.

If you're finding your feelings of anger are starting to affect your life in a negative way, you may find it helpful to talk to a counsellor or psychologist (see pages 36–37).

Your spirituality

Not everyone is religious or spiritual. But some people affected by cancer may discover this side of themselves during or after their treatment. Having cancer and finishing treatment can strengthen some people's beliefs. Other people may have reconsidered them. They may have changed what they believe or have discovered new beliefs.

If you're having some of these feelings, you may want to talk to someone about them. This could be a partner, close friend, spiritual or religious leader, or a hospital chaplain.



We've only talked about some of the feelings you may be going through. You may be feeling other emotions too. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Our booklet *How are you feeling?* has more detail on lots of different emotions and what may help.

Coping with physical changes

After treatment finishes, you may find you have to cope with some physical effects caused by cancer or its treatment. Your appearance may have changed, or your body may not work in the same way it used to. These changes may improve over time or they may be permanent.

This can have a big impact on your emotions. You may feel less confident about yourself. Or you may be worried about other people's reactions. It's important to pace yourself and give yourself time to adjust.

Changes to the way you look

Hair loss

Some people may lose their hair if they have chemotherapy or radiotherapy. It can take many weeks or months for it to grow back, especially long hair. It may also grow back differently, which can be a shock. It may be curly or straight, or a different colour or texture than it was before. Some people may also lose their eyebrows and eyelashes, but these usually grow back.

These changes in your appearance can be very upsetting. You may feel vulnerable and less confident. Talking about it may help you come to terms with these feelings (see pages 28–30).



Our booklet *Coping with hair loss* has more information about how losing your hair may make you feel and what may help you cope.

Weight changes

Some people find their weight has changed after treatment. You may have lost weight, or put some weight on. This is normal so don't be too hard on yourself. Eating healthily and being more active can help you manage your weight (see page 31).

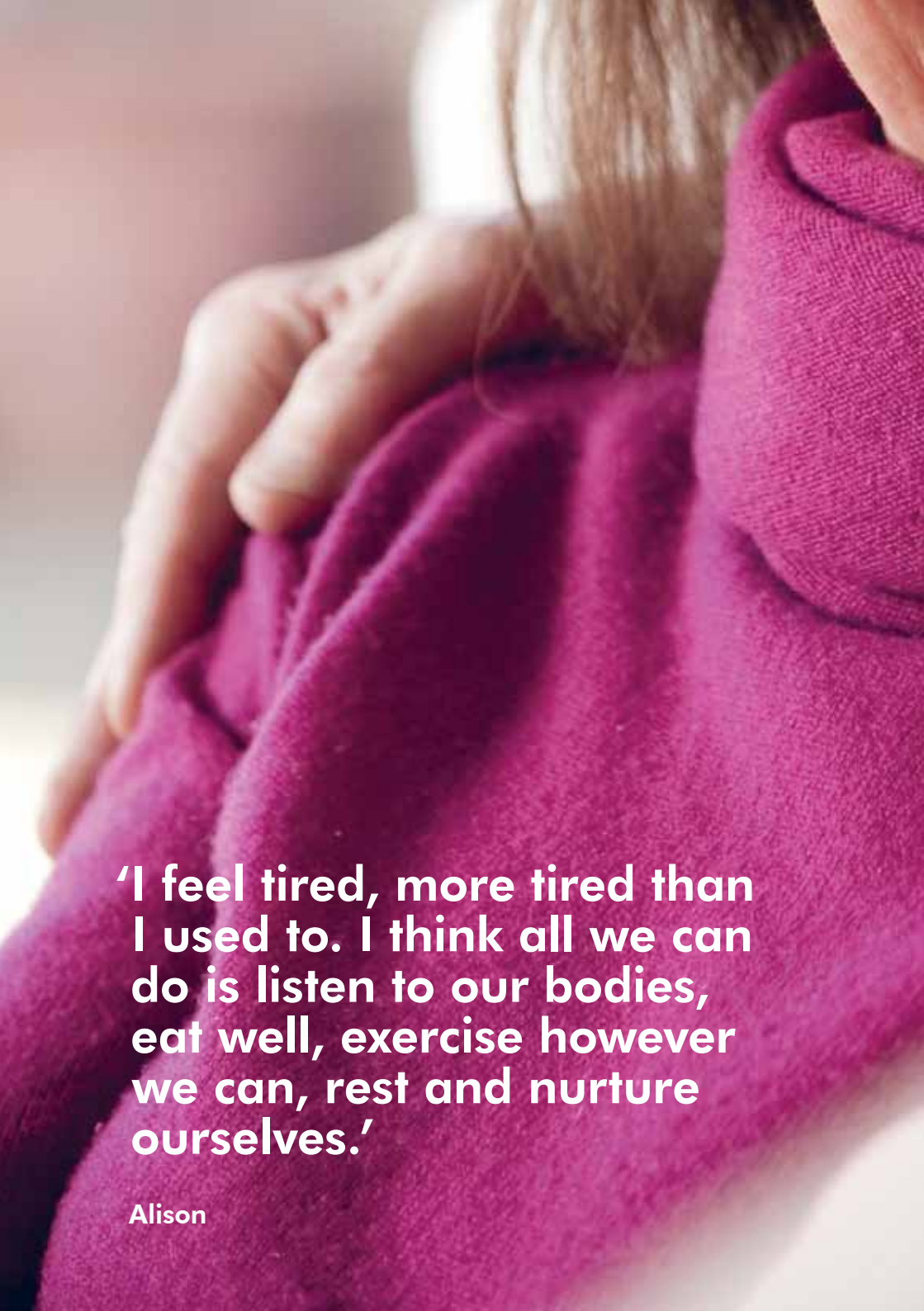
If a part of your body has been removed

Some women with breast cancer may have had a breast removed (mastectomy), or part of their breast removed (lumpectomy). Some people may have had their voicebox (larynx) removed, which will affect their ability to speak.

These changes can affect your confidence and be distressing. You may be worried about how others will react to the difference in your appearance or speech. It often takes time to adjust.

If you've had a mastectomy, your feelings about yourself as a woman may have changed. Some women find that breast reconstruction helps give them back their confidence and feelings of femininity. Our booklet *Understanding breast reconstruction* has more detail about this.

If you've had a laryngectomy, your doctor, nurse or speech and language therapist in the hospital can give you advice and support. They may put you in touch with someone in your area who has had a laryngectomy. You might also find it helpful to watch this video [macmillan.org.uk/voiceresoration](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/voiceresoration)



'I feel tired, more tired than I used to. I think all we can do is listen to our bodies, eat well, exercise however we can, rest and nurture ourselves.'

Alison

Changes to the way your body works

Tiredness

After treatment, many people feel extremely tired (fatigue). You may have no energy to do everyday things, and this can be stressful and frustrating. It's normal to feel tired for months after treatment. Some people find it lasts for much longer than this.

Gentle exercise can help build up energy levels (see page 31). It can also help with any stress you're feeling.

Stoma

Some people may have had a surgically-made opening on their abdomen called a stoma. This is to enable them to pass bowel motions or urine. Living with a stoma can be daunting and many people feel embarrassed about having one.

If you're worried about coping with a stoma, you might find it helpful to watch this video at [macmillan.org.uk/livingwithastoma](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/livingwithastoma)

Hormonal changes

Coping with hormonal changes after treatment can be challenging. For example, some women may have menopausal symptoms after certain treatments. Feeling anxious or upset about this is natural. It may help to talk to other people going through similar changes. This might be in a support group or by joining a group online (see pages 29–30).

Sex life

Treatment can affect the way you feel about sex. You may not have much of a sex drive. Or you may be worried about sex being painful or embarrassing. Our *Sexuality and cancer* booklet has lots of advice on how to deal with the physical and emotional changes that can affect your sex life.

Fertility

Some cancer treatments can affect your ability to have children. This can be very upsetting. Some people find it helps to talk things over with a counsellor (see page 36).

There are also some specialist support groups where you can meet other people who have been through a similar experience. Page 29 has more information on how to find them.

Long-term and late effects of treatment

Many effects of treatment get better over time. But some people still experience side effects for months, even years, after treatment has ended. These are called long-term and late effects.

When your treatment is over, it's natural to want to put the cancer behind you. So it can be frustrating to still have these side effects. But there are things that can be done to treat and manage them.

We have more information about managing the late effects of treatment for cancer in the head and neck, breast and bowel. We also have specific information about the possible late effects of having pelvic radiotherapy. You can order this information from be.macmillan.org.uk or by calling the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**.

Relationships

Cancer can have an emotional impact on your relatives, carers, partners and friends. This doesn't always end when treatment finishes. It's important to give yourself, and those close to you, time to adjust to life after cancer.

The impact on your relationships is likely to depend on how treatment has affected your day-to-day life and how strong your relationships were before you had cancer. Sometimes people find their relationships with family, friends or a partner have been strengthened by overcoming cancer together. You may feel that you wouldn't have been able to cope without their support.

However, cancer can put a lot of strain on relationships. Problems sometimes develop, even between close families or loving couples who have been together for a long time.

Talking openly about how you're feeling will help them to understand you better, and give you the support you need (see pages 28–30). If you have children, you could look for ways of getting them involved in your recovery, such as going for walks with you.

Some people find it difficult to start a new relationship after cancer. You might worry about how someone else will react to knowing that you've had cancer or to changes in your body. It may help to think about when you might want to tell someone about your experiences. There's no right time. You may want to wait until you feel comfortable with them.

What you can do to help yourself

It's important to look after yourself. Sharing your fears and worries with other people can help put things into perspective. You can also make changes to your lifestyle that can help you feel better.

Talking about how you feel

The first step towards coping with your emotions may just be telling someone how you really feel. This isn't always easy, but it can often help you feel better.

It can sometimes be difficult to talk about your cancer, even with supportive family and friends. You may feel very isolated and that only people who've gone through similar experiences can understand how you're feeling.

How people react may also surprise you. Some may disappoint you while others may be more supportive than you had expected.

The best person to talk to is whoever you usually talk to about important issues or difficult problems. This could be your closest friend, a parent, a sibling, a partner or a religious leader. It may be somebody who is going through a similar experience.

Not everyone has family and friends, or some people may just find it difficult to talk to people close to them. You may feel your GP or nurse specialist would be the best person to talk to. Or you may want to contact a counselling organisation (see pages 43–44).

Self-help and support groups

Joining a self-help or support group can have many benefits. These groups offer a chance to talk to other people who may be in a similar situation to you, and who may be facing the same challenges.

Not everyone finds talking in a group easy. It may help to go along to see what the group is like and then make a decision.



You can search for groups in your area online by visiting [macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups) or by asking a member of your healthcare team about what support is available locally. Or you could call our cancer support specialists on 0808 808 00 00 who can also help you find local groups.

Online support

If you use the internet, you may want to join an online support group or chat room. There are lots of groups aimed at particular types of cancer. And some more general groups where members chat about their practical and emotional issues after treatment has finished.

If you prefer, you can stay anonymous and just read other people's emails or posts. These messages can be both uplifting and sad. It can be very helpful to know that other people have similar thoughts, emotions and experiences to you.

This can make you feel less alone and you may learn some of the ways other people cope after treatment. Online groups are easy to leave, without any need for personal contact or explanations.

Our online community at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community) is a social networking site where you can talk to people in our chat rooms, blog your experiences, make friends and join support groups. You can share your own thoughts and feelings, and get support from others.

'Everyone is so supportive on the online community, they know exactly what you're going through. It can be fun too. It's not all just chats about cancer.'

Mal

You might also find the Healthtalkonline website helpful. It has video and audio clips of people talking about their experiences of cancer and its treatment. Visit [healthtalkonline.org](https://www.healthtalkonline.org)

Eating well and being active

It's important to be physically active and maintain a healthy, balanced diet after treatment. Doing this will not only benefit your overall health but may also help you feel better emotionally.

Eating well and keeping to a healthy weight will help you maintain or regain your strength, have more energy, and have an increased sense of well-being. It can also help reduce the risk of new cancers, heart disease, strokes and diabetes.

Our booklet *Healthy eating and cancer* has information and tips on how to eat well and maintain a healthy body weight.

Physical activity helps our bodies release chemicals (endorphins) that lift our mood and lower stress hormones. It's important not to push yourself too hard after treatment, but gradually introducing light exercise into your daily routine can really help. You could start by going for a walk each day. We've included some contact details for walking organisations on page 45.



Our Move more pack contains information about getting active after cancer treatment, and includes a diary to help you plan your activities. Visit macmillan.org.uk/movemore to find out more.

Writing down your feelings

Some people find that it helps to write down how they feel. Keeping a diary, journal or online blog can be a way of expressing your feelings without having to talk them through.

If you want to write down how you're feeling but are not sure where to start, try using the tool on the page opposite. You can use this to note down what makes a good or a bad day for you. There is space to write any next steps you may take to help you have more good days. Look at your lists and ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there anything you could do to have more of what is on your good day list, or for it to happen more often?
- Is there anything you can do to make sure you have fewer bad days?



The thinking tool on page 33 was written by people who had cancer. You can see examples, stories and support to use the tool at thinkaboutyourlife.org

Did you find this thinking tool useful?

Email cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk

Writing things down doesn't work for everybody. You could also try expressing your feelings through painting, drawing or playing music.



Good days



Bad days

Next steps:

Relaxation

Relaxation exercises can help you cope with your emotions. There are books, CDs, DVDs and classes that can show you how to relax. You may also want to take up yoga or progressive muscle relaxation, which involves getting to know groups of muscles around your body and learning to tense and relax them.

You can get relaxation DVDs and CDs from organisations such as Penny Brohn Cancer Care (see page 47). Macmillan also produces Relaxation corner, a set of guided meditations that you can download for free at learnzone.org.uk

Complementary therapies

There are many types of complementary therapy. These include acupuncture, aromatherapy, meditation, visualisation, homeopathy, art therapy and reflexology.

Complementary therapists usually work with the person as a whole. This is called a holistic approach. A complementary therapist may help you cope with some of your difficult feelings and help you get back some control. They can be a good way of reducing stress, sleeplessness, anxiety and depression.

You should always use a registered therapist. The British Complementary Medicine Association (see page 45) can give you the names of registered therapists and advice on what to look for. Remember to check the cost of treatment before to make sure you're fairly charged. Some support groups offer complementary therapies (see page 29 for details on how to find them).

Our booklet *Cancer and complementary therapies* has more information about the different types of therapy available.



Getting professional help

If you find that your feelings are overwhelming, then it may be time to get professional help. Making this decision can help you feel much more in control.

You could start by seeing your GP. It can help to write things down before the appointment. When you're with the doctor, try to tell them how you really feel. This will help them give you the most helpful advice or treatment. You might want to take someone along with you, to help remember everything you want to discuss.

We've suggested some types of professional help here, but there are others available. You can read more about them in our booklet *How are you feeling?*

Counselling

It can sometimes help to talk to someone outside your circle of family and friends, who has been trained to listen and help you explore your feelings. Talking one-to-one with a trained counsellor can help you sort out your emotions and find ways of coping with them. You may need to pay for counselling.

Some GPs, hospitals and cancer treatment centres employ counsellors. Or your doctor can refer you to one. You can also search for a qualified counsellor through the website **itsgoodtotalk.org.uk**

Psychological therapy

Clinical psychologists are trained to understand what people think and feel. They look at how you behave, particularly in stressful situations. Psychological therapy can help you to recognise, understand and deal with your emotions. Your GP can give you advice on how to contact a psychologist or psychotherapist.

You may be able to see a clinical psychologist on the NHS or Health Service. Or you can contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (see page 43). You may need to pay for psychotherapy.

Cognitive behavioural therapy

The way we think about things has a powerful effect on how we feel. This can include our thoughts about ourselves, our world and the future. Some people can develop negative patterns of thinking and behaviour, which keep them feeling low in spirit. Cognitive behavioural therapy is designed to break this cycle.

The behavioural part of this treatment is designed to help you find out what you can do that gives you a sense of satisfaction and pleasure.

Even when nothing else changes, the way you think about things can affect how you feel. The therapist will help you recognise the negative thoughts that are making you feel low and find effective ways to challenge them.

As you begin to feel better, you'll be able to do more. This will help you feel even better. Speak to your GP about therapy available locally, or contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (see page 43) to find out more.

About our information

We provide expert, up-to-date information about cancer. And all our information is free for everyone.

Order what you need

You may want to order more leaflets or booklets like this one. Visit **be.macmillan.org.uk** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

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

All of our information is also available online at **macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformation**

There you'll also find videos featuring real-life stories from people affected by cancer, and information from health and social care professionals.

Other formats

We also provide information in different languages and formats, including:

- audiobooks
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- Easy Read booklets
- large print
- translations.

Find out more at **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats**

If you'd like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Help us improve our information

We know that the people who use our information are the real experts. That's why we always involve them in our work. If you've been affected by cancer, you can help us improve our information.

We give you the chance to comment on a variety of information including booklets, leaflets and fact sheets.

If you'd like to hear more about becoming a reviewer, email reviewing@macmillan.org.uk You can get involved from home whenever you like, and we don't ask for any special skills – just an interest in our cancer information.



Other ways we can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we're here to support you. No one should face cancer alone.

Talk to us

If you or someone you know is affected by cancer, talking about how you feel and sharing your concerns can really help.

Macmillan Support Line

Our free, confidential phone line is open Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. Our cancer support specialists can:

- help with any medical questions you have about your cancer or treatment
- help you access benefits and give you financial advice
- be there to listen if you need someone to talk to
- tell you about services that can help you in your area.

Call us on **0808 808 00 00** or email us via our website, **[macmillan.org.uk/talktous](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/talktous)**

Information centres

Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. There, you can speak with someone face to face.

Visit one to get the information you need, or if you'd like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone alone and in confidence.

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

Talk to others

No one knows more about the impact cancer can have on your life than those who have been through it themselves. That's why we help to bring people together in their communities and online.

Support groups

Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, we can help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face to face with people who understand. Find out about support groups in your area by calling us or by visiting [macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport)

Online community

Thousands of people use our online community to make friends, blog about their experiences and join groups to meet other people going through the same things. You can access it any time of day or night. Share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)

The Macmillan healthcare team

Our nurses, doctors and other health and social care professionals give expert care and support to individuals and their families. Call us or ask your GP, consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals near you.

Help with money worries

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you've been affected in this way, we can help.

Financial advice

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

Help accessing benefits

Our benefits advisers can offer advice and information on benefits, tax credits, grants and loans. They can help you work out what financial help you could be entitled to. They can also help you complete your forms and apply for benefits.

Macmillan Grants

Macmillan offers one-off payments to people with cancer. A grant can be for anything from heating bills or extra clothing to a much-needed break.

Call us on **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a financial guide or benefits adviser, or to find out more about Macmillan Grants. We can also tell you about benefits advisers in your area.

Visit **[macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport)** to find out more about how we can help you with your finances.

Help with work and cancer

Whether you're an employee, a carer, an employer or are self-employed, we can provide support and information to help you manage cancer at work.

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

Other useful organisations

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

Counselling, emotional and well-being support

Beacon

80 University Street,
Belfast BT7 1HE
Tel 028 9032 8474

Email

info@beaconwellbeing.org

www.beaconwellbeing.org

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

Breathing Space

Tel 0800 83 85 87
(Mon–Thurs, 6pm–2am,
Fri 6pm–Mon 6am)

www.breathing-spacescotland.co.uk

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

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

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

Tel 01455 883 300

Email bacp@bacp.co.uk

www.bacp.co.uk

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

Look Good Feel Better

West Hill House, 32 West Hill,
Epsom KT19 8JD

Tel 01372 747 500

Email info@lgfb.co.uk

www.lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk

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

USA branch has online advice for men at

www.lookgoodfeelbetterformen.org

Relate

Premier House,
Carolina Court, Lakeside,
Doncaster DN4 5RA

Tel 0300 100 1234

www.relate.org.uk

Offers advice, relationship counselling, sex therapy, workshops, mediation, consultations and face-to-face support, by phone and through its website.

Rethink Mental Illness

89 Albert Embankment,
London SE1 7TP

Tel 0300 5000 927

(Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm)

Email advice@rethink.org

Provides mental health advice and information, and campaigns for more support for people with mental health problems.

Samaritans

Chris, PO Box 9090,
Stirling FK8 2SA

Tel 08457 90 90 90

Email jo@samaritans.org

www.samaritans.org

Provides 24-hour confidential, non-judgemental and emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. Provided by phone, email or letter.

UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

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

Tel 020 7014 9955

Email info@ukcp.org.uk

www.psychotherapy.org.uk

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

Healthy lifestyle support

British Nutrition Foundation

Imperial House 6th Floor,
15-19 Kingsway,
London WC2B 6UN

Tel 020 7557 7930

Email postbox@nutrition.org.uk

www.nutrition.org.uk

Provides information and advice about diet, physical activity and health.

Let's Walk Cymru

Tel 02920 646890

**[www.ramblers.org.uk/
letswalkcymru](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/letswalkcymru)**

Walking groups in Wales.

Paths for all

Tel 01259 218 888

www.pathsforall.org.uk

Walking groups in Scotland.

Walking for Health

Tel 020 7339 8541

www.walkingforhealth.org.uk

Walking groups in England.

Walk NI

Tel 028 9030 3930

www.walkni.com

Walking groups in Northern Ireland.

Complementary therapy support

British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA)

PO Box 5122,
Bournemouth BH8 OWG

Tel 0845 345 5977

Email office@bcma.co.uk

www.bcma.co.uk

Holds a register of qualified complementary and alternative therapists who are all members of the BCMA and adhere to its code of ethics.

Cancer information and support

Cancer Black Care

79 Acton Lane,
London NW10 8UT
Tel 020 8961 4151

Email

info@cancerblackcare.org.uk

www.cancerblackcare.org.uk

Offers information and support for people with cancer from ethnic communities, their friends, carers and families.

Cancer Focus

Northern Ireland

40–44 Eglantine Avenue,
Belfast BT9 6DX

Tel 0800 783 3339

(Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm)

Email hello@cancerfocusni.org

www.cancerfocusni.org

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

Cancer Research UK

www.cancerhelp.org.uk

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

Cancer Support Scotland

Calman Cancer Support
Centre, 75 Shelley Road,
Glasgow G12 0ZE

Tel 0800 652 4531

Email [info@](mailto:info@cancersupportscotland.org)

cancersupportscotland.org

www.cancersupportscotland.org

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

Irish Cancer Society

43–45 Northumberland Road,
Dublin 4, Ireland

Tel 1800 200 700

(Mon–Thu, 9am–7pm,

Fri, 9am–5pm)

Email helpline@irishcancer.ie

www.cancer.ie

National cancer charity offering information, support and care to people affected by cancer. Has a helpline staffed by specialist cancer nurses. You can also chat to a nurse online and use the site's message board.

Macmillan Cancer Voices
www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices

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

Maggie's Centres

1st Floor, One Waterloo Street,
 Glasgow G2 6AY

Tel 0300 123 1801

Email enquiries@maggiescentres.org

www.maggiescentres.org

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

Penny Brohn Cancer Care

Chapel Pill Lane,
 Pill, Bristol BS20 0HH

Tel 0845 123 2310

(Mon–Fri, 9.30am–5pm)

Email helpline@pennybrohn.org

www.pennybrohn.org/cancercare.org

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

Riprap

www.riprap.org.uk

Developed especially for teenagers who have a parent with cancer.

Tenovus

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

Tel 0808 808 1010

(Mon–Sun, 8am–8pm)

www.tenovus.org.uk

Aims to help everyone get equal access to cancer treatment and support.

Funds research and provides support such as mobile cancer support units, a free helpline, an 'Ask the nurse' service on the website and benefits advice.

General health information

Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

www.hscni.net

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

Healthtalkonline

www.healthtalkonline.org

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

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

National Cancer Institute – National

Institute of Health – USA

www.cancer.gov

Gives information on cancer and treatments.

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

The UK's biggest health information website.

Also has service information for England.

NHS Direct Wales

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

NHS health information site for Wales.

NHS Inform

www.nhsinform.co.uk

NHS health information site for Scotland.

Patient UK

www.patient.co.uk

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

Financial or legal information

Benefit Enquiry Line

Northern Ireland

Tel 0800 220 674

(Mon–Wed and Fri, 9am–5pm, Thu, 10am–5pm)

Textphone 0800 243 787

**[www.nidirect.gov.uk/
money-tax-and-benefits](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/money-tax-and-benefits)**

Provides information and advice about disability benefits and carers' benefits.

Citizens Advice

Provides advice on financial, legal, housing and employment issues. Find details for your local office in the phone book or on one of the following websites:

England and Wales

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Scotland**www.cas.org.uk****Northern Ireland****www.citizensadvice.co.uk**

You can also find advice online in a range of languages at **adviceguide.org.uk**

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Disability Benefits Helpline**

08457 123 456

Textphone 0845 722 4433

**Personal Independence
Payment Helpline**

0845 850 3322

Textphone 0845 601 6677**Carer's Allowance Unit**

0845 608 4321

Textphone 0845 604 5312

**[www.gov.uk/browse/
benefits](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits)**

Manages state benefits in England, Scotland and Wales. You can apply for benefits and find information online or through its helplines.

GOV.UK**www.gov.uk**

Has comprehensive information about social security benefits and public services.

**Personal Finance Society –
'Find an Adviser' service**

www.findanadviser.org

Use the website to find qualified financial advisers in your area.

**Support for teenagers
and young adults**

Teenage Cancer Trust

3rd Floor, 93 Newman Street, London W1T 3EZ

Tel 020 7612 0370**www.teenagecancertrust.org**

A charity devoted to improving the lives of teenagers and young adults with cancer. Runs a support network for young people with cancer, their friends and families.



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

Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up to date but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it.

Thanks

This booklet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by our medical editor, Dr Tim Iveson, Macmillan Consultant Medical Oncologist.

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References

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

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Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It's just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer. They're produced by our cancer information specialists who, along with our nurses, benefits advisers, campaigners and volunteers, are part of the Macmillan team. When people are facing the toughest fight of their lives, we're there to support them every step of the way.

We want to make sure no one has to go through cancer alone, so we need more people to help us. When the time is right for you, here are some ways in which you can become a part of our team.



Share your cancer experience

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

Campaign for change

We need your help to make sure everyone gets the right support. Take an action, big or small, for better cancer care.

Help someone in your community

A lift to an appointment. Help with the shopping. Or just a cup of tea and a chat. Could you lend a hand?

Raise money

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

Give money

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

Call us to find out more

0300 1000 200

macmillan.org.uk/getinvolved

Please fill in your personal details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other

Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Please accept my gift of £

(Please delete as appropriate)
I enclose a cheque / postal order /
Charity Voucher made payable to
Macmillan Cancer Support

OR debit my:
Visa / MasterCard / CAF Charity
Card / Switch / Maestro

Card number

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Date / /

Don't let the taxman keep your money

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

- I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Macmillan Cancer Support to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make in the future, as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in each tax year, that is at least equal to the tax that Charities & CASCs I donate to will reclaim on my gifts. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify and that Macmillan Cancer Support will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

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

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



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

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

More than one in three of us will get cancer. For most of us it will be the toughest fight we ever face. And the feelings of isolation and loneliness that so many people experience make it even harder. But you don't have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way.

We are the nurses and therapists helping you through treatment. The experts on the end of the phone. The advisers telling you which benefits you're entitled to. The volunteers giving you a hand with the everyday things. The campaigners improving cancer care. The community there for you online, any time. The supporters who make it all possible.

Together, we are all Macmillan Cancer Support.

For cancer support every step of the way, call Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00 (Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm) or visit macmillan.org.uk

Hard of hearing? Use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.
Non-English speaker? Interpreters available.
Braille and large print versions on request.

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