

Giving you the information you need

Living with cancer



MEN AND CANCER

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



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The **Living with cancer** series is a range of booklets giving you the information you need if you are living with or are affected by cancer. Other booklets available in the series:

- The cancer guide
- Men and cancer
- Talking to children when an adult has cancer
- I'm still me: a guide for young people living with cancer
- Cancer survivor's guide: because cancer doesn't end when your treatment is over
- Palliative care: practical help in advanced cancer
- Palliative care: emotional support in advanced cancer
- When someone with cancer is dying
- Coping with shortness of breath
- Living with breathlessness
- Managing breathlessness

To order any of the series call **0800 500 800** or to talk to someone about cancer call **0808 808 2020**

Introduction

There are many cancer guides for women, but information designed just for men is hard to find. This guide aims to fill that gap.

Cancer is like a journey. You don't know everything that's going to happen. But it helps to have a map.

This booklet takes you through the different phases. It's divided into sections so you can get the information that matters to you right now, whether you:

- are worried you might have cancer
- have just been diagnosed with cancer
- are thinking about or starting treatment.

Each section talks about different areas of your life that can be affected by cancer. You will find basic information and places to look for more details.

There's also a special section with useful contacts. In addition to websites, there are phone numbers so you can talk to someone who understands. Many people are ready to help – you don't have to make this journey alone.



Cancer basics

Our bodies are made up of microscopic building blocks called cells. Old cells die all the time and new ones constantly replace them. Cancer happens when something goes wrong with this process, and some cells start growing out of control.

When these abnormal cells group together, they form a tumour, which can be:

- benign, needing little or no treatment or
- malignant, which means it is cancer that could spread without treatment.

Cancer is not actually just one disease. There are more than 200 different types of cancer. The specific treatments available depend on the type of cancer.

Cancer affects each person in a different way and everyone responds differently to treatment.

One in three people will have cancer at some time during their lives. The good news is that today,

modern medicine cures thousands of people every year. Many people also benefit from treatments that slow down the growth of cancer and make their symptoms better.

Worried about cancer?

If you are worried you might have cancer, it's important to see your GP and get it checked out. If you don't have a GP, you can ask NHS Direct to help you find a doctor by phoning 0845 4647.

Medical research tells us that men delay seeing the doctor about cancer symptoms because they:

- don't recognise cancer warning signs
- don't want to seem weak (or unmasculine)
- remember bad medical experiences from the past
- are embarrassed
- are too busy
- are afraid.

Don't ignore worrying symptoms. With cancer, prompt treatment often has a better chance of working.

Cancer warning signs

Knowing your own body is a good defence against cancer. For example, by making it a habit to check your testicles, you're more likely to notice a lump before it gets bigger.

Here are some common warning signs that you should check with your GP:

- a cough that doesn't go away
- chest or throat problems that last a long time
- changes in bowel or bladder habits
- bleeding or discharge
- skin changes
- lumps on your body
- ongoing indigestion or swallowing problems
- feeling more tired than usual
- pain
- weight loss you can't explain.

These symptoms can have other causes, not just cancer. The sooner you have them checked,

the sooner you can get treatment, whatever the underlying problem may be.

Cancers affecting men

There are many different types of cancer. Most cancers can affect either men or women. For example, lung and bowel cancer are common in both sexes.

Most common cancers affecting men and women

In men	In women
1 Prostate (25%)	1 Breast (31%)
2 Lung (16%)	2 Bowel (12%)
3 Bowel (14%)	3 Lung (11%)

Figures for the UK in 2004.
Source: Cancer Research UK

It is rare, but you might be surprised to hear that men can also get breast cancer.

There are a few cancers seen only in men.

Learn about prevention

Visit Cancer Research UK at www.cancerresearchuk.org

Prostate cancer is the most common of all cancers in men. It happens more in men aged over 50, particularly African and African-Caribbean men.

The prostate is a small gland that sits beneath the male bladder. Prostate cancer is usually slow growing but sometimes it's more aggressive.

Nearly all men experience prostate problems as they get older. This may or may not be due to cancer. Symptoms are:

- needing to pass urine urgently, and more often
- urinating in stops and starts, not a steady stream
- finding it hard to start the flow of urine
- blood in the urine
- pain in your back or hips.

If you have any of these symptoms, it's important to see your GP.

Your doctor might offer you a blood test called PSA (prostate specific antigen). A raised PSA

level means there's a possibility you might have prostate cancer. But the PSA test on its own is not 100% reliable. Speak to your GP about the risks and benefits of having this test.

A diagnosis of prostate cancer is confirmed by:

- a doctor's examination
- scans
- a biopsy (removal and laboratory study of some prostate tissue).

If you do have prostate cancer, the exact treatment will depend on your own situation. Surgery, radiotherapy or hormone therapy are available treatments, but sometimes the best option is to watch and wait.

Men of any age can get **testicular cancer**, but most often it affects young men aged 15 to 45. There are about 2,000 cases in the UK every year, so it's not very common.

You are more at risk of getting testicular cancer if a close

member of your family has had it. The risk is higher for White British men than for African, African-Caribbean or Asian men. There's no proof that a sporting injury increases your risk.

Check your testicles regularly and see your doctor right away if you notice any of these signs:

- a lump or swelling in a testicle
- a testicle has become harder
- a dull ache, pain or discomfort in the scrotum or in your groin
- your scrotum becomes full of fluid.

Treatment is usually successful if it starts early. Options for treatment are surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

More than nine out of ten men with testicular cancer are cured, continuing to have a normal sex life and fathering children.

Cancer of the penis is very rare. Each year, it affects just 400 men in the UK.

It happens mostly to men over the age of 70. If you've ever had an infection with certain strains of the human papilloma virus (HPV) that causes genital warts, this increases your risk. Smoking is another risk.

Symptoms include a growth, lump or sore on the skin of the penis, which does not heal. Bleeding or discharge from the penis are also symptoms. Other health problems – not necessarily cancer – might be the cause. Either way, it's important to see a doctor quickly.

To check for penile cancer, you might have a biopsy or a scan.

Treatment is usually successful if it's started early. The options include surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

Sources of information about male cancers

Everyman – www.everyman-campaign.org

Orchid Cancer Appeal – www.orchid-cancer.org.uk

Prostrate Cancer Charity – www.prostrate-cancer.org.uk



2 Getting a diagnosis

Waiting for answers

Your GP is the first person to see if you are worried you might have a symptom of cancer. They will send you to a hospital specialist for tests if they have any reason to suspect you have cancer.

Lately, the Government has made patient choice in the NHS a top priority. If you do need tests and treatment, you might be able to select the hospital you attend. Ask your GP about the options and talk to them about the best choice for you.

To make sure you get the right tests quickly, GPs use NHS referral guidelines.

Your GP should be able to tell you:

- where you are being referred to
- how soon the appointment will be
- who you will see
- what to expect at your appointment
- how long it will take to get test results or a diagnosis.

Under current NHS targets, if your case is urgent you should wait no longer than two weeks to see a specialist.

Getting an appointment, having the tests and then getting the results will take time. It can seem like a very long wait when you are worried.

'I was told to come back a week later after my biopsy. That was the longest week of my life.'

You can talk to your GP at any time if you think it's taking too long or if you are anxious. If the waiting is unbearable you could contact the consultant's secretary and ask how much longer it will be, or whether they can speed the process up.

Sometimes you might need an urgent operation right away, and get confirmation of your cancer diagnosis later. For example, this can happen with testicular cancer.

You can call Macmillan CancerLine to learn about tests or if you just need someone to talk to. Your call is confidential. Phone 0808 808 2020.

The Macmillan Cancer Guide tells you more about choosing a hospital, what to expect and getting the best care. You can order the guide by phoning 0800 500 800.

Getting test results

While you're waiting for your appointment, you can use the time to get prepared.

Find out about practical things, like how you'll get to the clinic. Your hospital probably has a website with details about parking and outpatient clinics.

It's not always possible to see a male doctor or nurse, but you can certainly request this.

When you see the doctor or consultant, it's a good idea to take someone with you. They can support and comfort you in case you get bad news. Later, they can help you remember everything you've heard. During the appointment, if you get nervous they can remind you about the questions you wanted to ask.

There's a lot to take in when you hear your test results. You can ask the doctor or consultant for written information to remind you about the details. Some people take notes or make a recording to refer to later. If you bring someone along to your appointment, this is something they could do for you.

Your GP will get a letter from the doctor or consultant informing them of your test results. You can ask for a copy of this letter. You can also request to see future letters and the rest of your medical records.

Questions to ask the doctor

It's easy to forget what you want to say when you're nervous, ill, or feeling rushed. It helps to write your questions down before you go to see the doctor.

Here are some questions you might want to ask.

- **What tests am I having?**
- **What do the results tell you?**
- **What does my diagnosis mean?**
- **How far advanced is my cancer?**
- **What happens next?**
- **What are my choices for treatment?**
- **What are the benefits and risks of the tests and treatments?**
- **What side effects could I experience from my treatments?**
- **How will my everyday life be affected?**
- **What about the effect on my sex life and being able to have children?**
- **What difference will it make if I go private? How much would it cost?**
- **Who is the doctor in charge of my care?**
- **How do I get help in an emergency and out of hours?**

Emotional reactions

When you hear that you have cancer, one common reaction is to feel numb, and not really take it in. You might feel like it's not really true.

Many people take it as a terrible shock.

You could have some very strong emotions. Your feelings may also change from day to day or even hour to hour.

Other feelings you might experience include:

- anger
- powerlessness
- fear
- sadness
- loneliness
- anxiety
- guilt
- loss of self-esteem and confidence.

'I got really angry when anything went wrong. I was blaming the cancer for everything.'

All of these are normal reactions to a cancer diagnosis.

The people close to you – your partner, family and friends – can have these reactions, too. Sometimes the stress of a cancer diagnosis causes family or relationship difficulties. Or it can bring you closer together.

Men often believe they have to be strong and not show their feelings. But whatever kind of support suits you, it's out there for the asking.

Some people don't want to talk about cancer – and some people can't stop talking about it. You might really want someone to hug you. Whatever you need, let the people around you know. They may not be sure what to say or do to help you.

There are many people who can help at this time. You could talk to your:

- partner, family and friends
- GP
- cancer nurse
- faith leader.

You can also phone helplines, such as the Macmillan CancerLine. You might want to join a cancer self help group in your area. If you want to speak to someone face to face, visit a local Macmillan cancer information and support centre.

Section 6 provides more information about Macmillan services and other organisations.

'Often I just felt really sad. But the worst thing was I couldn't seem to tell anyone about it.'

Cancer and body image

Cancer, or its treatment, may change your physical appearance. For example, you might lose your hair from chemotherapy or have scars from an operation.

You might also be too tired or ill to do the things you used to do, at least for a while. For some people, cancer or its treatment means learning to live with a new physical disability.

This can be hard to come to terms with, so don't hesitate to ask your doctor or nurse for help with these feelings. They can also refer you to a counsellor if you want this.

The charity Changing Faces offers counselling and information to people with a disfigurement anywhere on the body.

Contact Changing Faces on 0845 4500 275 or www.changingfaces.org.uk

Your emotional wellbeing

A healthy lifestyle keeps your body at its best and in the same way, you can take action to protect your emotional and mental health.

If you can keep up something you enjoy, like a hobby or watching sport, this will lift your spirits. Sometimes people with cancer find this too hard to do – but they also discover new interests and pleasures in life.

Another strategy is to have a cancer buddy to talk to. This is someone you get on with, but who's not too close to you. This way you can talk more freely. You can ask a friend, or find a cancer buddy through a local self help or support group.

By joining a self help group, you can meet other people who know what it's like to live with cancer. Your cancer nurse should know about local groups that might suit you.

Some people use meditation or relaxation exercises to manage stress.

You can always talk to your doctors and nurses about feelings that trouble you. They won't mind and they should be able to help.

If you think this won't be enough, ask them to refer you to a counsellor. Do ask for this kind of help especially if your feelings:

- aren't getting any better with time
- are affecting your relationships, your work or your usual interests
- make you wonder if you'd be better off not living, or if others would be better off without you.

'I am more aware of life now. I seem to be always noticing and enjoying things that were always there but that I took for granted before.'

Your spiritual side

Some people find their religious faith or spiritual beliefs give them extra strength to face cancer. Others find their faith is shaken by a cancer diagnosis.

If you want to, you can talk to your faith leader (for example your priest, minister, rabbi or imam) about your worries and fears. They are used to talking to people in the same situation as yourself.

You might find that your faith community is a good source of practical and emotional support.

The hospital chaplain is willing to help people of any religion – or even people who don't have a faith. You can ask to talk to the chaplain any time.

Help with emotional problems

There are many people you can turn to:

Royal College of Psychiatrists www.rcpsych.ac.uk
SANE 0845 767 8000 or www.sane.org.uk
Samaritans 0845 790 9090 or www.samaritans.org



3 Having treatment

Finding facts

Learning more about cancer can make you feel more in control and helps you make the best decisions possible.

Some people want lots of cancer information fast. Some need to take it more slowly.

If you're feeling tired, ill or overwhelmed, you could ask a friend or relative to gather the facts for you.

There are many places to find information about your treatment options and the services available in your area.

Health professionals:

According to medical studies, people place the most trust in cancer information received from their health professionals. Talking to your doctors and nurses is certainly the best place to start. You can also talk to other professionals, such as radiographers and physiotherapists.

Online: There's a lot of information about cancer on the internet. Many men tell researchers that they really like using this method.

The trick is to choose websites that are reliable and have high quality information. There are internet businesses and even scams aimed at people with cancer.

One good way to judge a website is by the organisation that runs it. You can count on information from:

- The NHS, including hospitals, your local NHS cancer network and NHS Direct (called NHS 24 in Scotland).
- The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), publishes many cancer guidelines for the NHS in England and Wales. In Scotland this is done by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN).

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- Registered charities, such as Macmillan Cancer Support, which you know and have a good reputation. Cancerbackup and Cancer Research UK are two other charities that provide reliable information.
- Your local council authority, which should have online articles about voluntary groups, social services, carers and advice on claiming benefits.

Other signs of good quality include:

- a recent date on the material; medical information changes rapidly
- a good balance, giving different sides of the issue
- no sensational language or hype
- no extreme claims that seem too good to be true
- names of medical experts who have written or checked the articles
- evidence from published medical research.

If you need help to find information online or if you don't have access to a computer, check what's on offer at your local public library.

Macmillan information and support centres

You can visit one of our centres for face-to-face support from Macmillan staff and trained volunteers. You will also find booklets, leaflets and videos. Some centres offer self help and support groups.

Ask your doctor or nurse if there is a Macmillan centre near you.

To find a centre, you can also call the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 or visit the website at www.macmillan.org.uk

3 Having treatment

Main treatments

All cancers are different, and all people are different. So cancer treatment is tailored to individuals.

You may have one type of treatment or a combination of different treatments.

Cancer care is a very complex area of modern medicine. It can take a while to learn the details and understand the language. Don't hesitate to ask your doctors and nurses to explain things in simpler terms if you need them to.

To give you a starting point, the main treatment options are outlined here.

Chemotherapy (chemo):

Doctors use anti-cancer drugs to destroy cancer cells and to prevent the cancer from spreading. Sometimes chemotherapy can get rid of all the cancer cells in the body.

Chemotherapy works by interfering with the way cells divide. Healthy cells can recover from the damage caused by chemotherapy, but cancer cells can't, so they eventually die. There are more than 50 different chemotherapy drugs. Some are given on their own but often several drugs are combined. Depending on what drug you have, it can be given in different ways:

- through a drip into a vein
- as injections into a vein or into a muscle
- as tablets.

Many people don't get much in the way of side effects. If you do experience side effects, it's important to tell your doctor or nurse. They can offer you additional medicines or make changes in your treatment, which will help you feel better.

3 Having treatment

Chemotherapy side effects can include:

- feeling sick
- not wanting to eat
- hair loss
- mouth, gum and throat sores
- feeling depressed, down or nervous
- skin problems
- kidney and bladder problems
- blood problems, such as anaemia
- lower immunity, meaning you can catch infections more easily. Your chemotherapy unit will tell you what symptoms to look for and who to contact if this happens.

Radiotherapy (radiation therapy): Most people with cancer will have radiotherapy as part of their treatment. It is designed to destroy the cancer cells.

Radiotherapy can be given externally or internally.

External radiation therapy uses a large machine called a linear accelerator. It focuses high energy x-rays precisely at the tumour.

There are two main types of internal radiotherapy:

- Radioactive implants (wires, needles or 'seeds') are placed into the area that is to be treated. This is called brachytherapy. It's sometimes used to treat prostate cancer.
- A radioactive liquid which you are given either as a drink or by injection. Thyroid cancer is one type that is commonly treated this way.

3 Having treatment

The side effects depend on the area of your body that is treated and the dose of radiotherapy given. These may include:

- feeling tired
- feeling sick
- not wanting to eat
- red, tanned or itchy skin
- hair loss
- stomach ache or diarrhoea
- weak bladder
- impotence
- infertility.

Before you start treatment you can speak to the senior radiologist (a doctor specialising in radiotherapy). They can tell you what to expect and advise you on managing any side effects.

Surgery: If you need an operation, the surgeon will try to cut out the cancer cells. Generally, they also remove some of the surrounding healthy tissue. This gives the best chance of catching any stray cancer cells that may have formed near the tumour.

Sometimes surgery is quick and simple. Other operations are bigger and have more risks and permanent effects on your body. It all depends on your own situation.

Make sure you understand the risks as well as the benefits of surgery before you agree to it (this is called 'informed consent'). Don't be afraid to ask questions, and keep asking until you have a clear picture. You can also ask to talk to the senior surgeon before you go ahead.

Hormone treatment: Hormones are chemical messengers that occur naturally in the body. They can make certain types of cancer grow more quickly.

This treatment uses drugs to block your body's own hormone action. It can be used for prostate cancer.

Hormone treatment means taking tablets or having injections over a long period of time, maybe even permanently. You can learn to do these injections yourself, which increases your independence.

3 Having treatment

Common side effects include hot flushes, tiredness and nausea. Sensitive nipples and enlarged breast tissue are also possible. If you experience any of these side effects talk to your doctor because they can help you.

Hormone therapy can also cause impotence and lower your sex drive. If you are worried about this, talk it over with your doctor or nurse.

See [section 4](#) for more information about sex and treatment.

'I was sick for days after the treatment but once they changed the drugs they were giving me, it got much better.'

Pain, symptoms and side effects

Most people are afraid of cancer pain and the side effects of treatment.

But with good medical and nursing care, these should be well managed in nearly all cases.

Breathlessness is another problem that can happen. You can learn simple ways to improve breathlessness. Ask your doctor or nurse if you can see a physiotherapist.

Some people also find that relaxation, massage and other complementary therapies make them feel better see page 24 for more details.

If your pain or other cancer symptoms are getting worse, ask your doctor or nurse for help right away so you can get things under control.

Macmillan Cancer Support offers booklets on breathlessness called *Coping with the shortness of breath, Living with breathlessness and Managing breathlessness*. You can request a copy by phoning 0800 500 800.

3 Having treatment

Building your support team

Every person responds differently to cancer treatment. But fatigue is common and you may feel more tired than usual.

Try to plan ahead before your treatment, so you can get plenty of rest when you need to.

Think about whether you will need to take time off work while you're having treatment. See page 33 for more information on working whilst living with cancer.

It's easier to get through treatment if you have support from other people.

You can build a team of relatives, friends, neighbours and work colleagues. This takes some of the pressure off your partner and close family, too.

Think about everyday tasks and who could help with them. Keep a list of jobs handy so if people ask how they can help, they can just pick a task.

Your back-up team can help you through treatment, too. For example, ask someone to drive you to appointments.

It's good to know that people care but sometimes you might not feel up to answering phone calls and having visitors. You can ask one person to be your 'gatekeeper'. They can take messages, answer questions about how you're doing (if you want them to share this information) and tell people whether you'd like visitors at the moment.

'Some friends have turned out to be unexpectedly supportive. They were the people arriving on my doorstep giving a hand.'

3 Having treatment

Complementary therapies

Many people with cancer turn to complementary therapies, such as relaxation exercises and massage.

Macmillan Cancer Support sees complementary therapies as an option that can be used alongside conventional medical treatment, not as an alternative or a replacement for it.

These therapies can certainly relieve stress and help you feel better in yourself.

Remember to choose a qualified practitioner.

Some hospitals offer complementary therapies to people with cancer and their carers. You might also be able to get this free from your local Macmillan cancer information and support centre.

Find out more about treatments

If you need more details or if you're having a treatment that's not covered here, visit the Macmillan website at www.macmillan.org.uk or call the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020.

The charity Cancerbackup also offers in-depth information about many treatments. Contact Cancerbackup on 0808 800 1234 or visit www.cancerbackup.org.uk



Your partner

Your cancer diagnosis and treatment will have an impact on both you and your partner.

On top of feeling worried about you, your partner will have their own emotions to cope with. They might have trouble believing it's true. Or they could feel shocked, sad and anxious about the future.

Cancer might also change your

relationship, especially if they will be caring for you while you are ill or having treatment.

Make sure they have a chance to get a break sometimes and that they look after their own health and wellbeing. See the end of this section for more information about carers.

Talking about cancer

People react differently to having cancer. Some people want to talk about it a lot, some say little or nothing.

However you feel about it, talking to someone who understands will probably relieve some of your anxiety.

It can be hard to talk to the people closest to you because you don't want to upset them or damage your relationship.

Maybe you don't want to show your emotions or are afraid you will break down. Sometimes it's easier to talk to a stranger who knows something about cancer.

This is where services such as Macmillan CancerLine can really help. You can contact the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020. We can also help you decide how to break news or discuss your cancer with other people.

It can be hard to talk about cancer, but you might both feel less lonely if you share your feelings.

Sex

You might be worried about how cancer is going to affect your sex life. If so, don't be embarrassed to ask for help in finding a solution.

It may not be easy but try to talk to your partner about it. They are probably worried, too. You might both feel better if you talk it over.

It's true that some types of cancer and some types of treatment can lower your sex drive, or make it difficult to get an erection. These effects might only be temporary.

Your doctors and nurses can answer questions about sex and cancer. They will not judge you and are there to help, so don't hesitate to ask. They might be able to offer you effective medical treatments. Sometimes you just need advice about different ways to enjoy sex.

With some kinds of cancer treatment, you should use a condom for a while. Your doctor or nurse can tell you about this as well.

'I wish I'd plucked up the courage to talk about how the treatment would affect my sex life. It would really have helped if I'd had some idea what to expect.'

Talk about sex and relationship worries

You can phone the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 if you are worried about cancer and your sex life.

The charity Relate offers counselling for couples in all kinds of relationships, regardless of marital status or sexuality. Relate can be contacted on 0845 456 1310 or visit their website at www.relate.org.uk

Fertility (having children)

Some types of cancer – and some types of treatment – can affect a man’s ability to become a father. Sometimes the effect is only temporary. It all depends on your individual situation.

Try not to be embarrassed. If it’s on your mind, ask your doctors and nurses how your fertility might be affected. They can answer your questions and talk to you about the various options you have.

You might be able to take steps to protect your fertility. For example, some men can store their sperm, allowing them to have children in the future.

Talking to your children

If you have children, you might want to protect them by hiding your cancer from them. But most children can sense when something is wrong.

When children are worried or frightened they might start acting differently. They may become very quiet, clingy or more naughty than usual.

It’s generally best to tell them what’s happening. Their imagined fears might be worse than the reality. They will probably feel safer and find it easier to cope if they know what’s going on. Use words that are right for their age and keep it simple.

Help for you and your children

You can call the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 for advice on how to talk to your children about cancer.

Young people aged 12 to 21 can phone the Macmillan YouthLine for advice and support on 0808 808 0800.

Macmillan Cancer Support also has a booklet, *Talking to children when an adult has cancer*. Visit the website at www.macmillan.org.uk or call 0800 500 800 to request a copy.

You’ll also need to decide whether to tell their school what’s happening. If you do, their teachers can understand what your child is going through and give them support.

Friends and social life

Good friends can boost your morale when you are coming to terms with your diagnosis and going through treatment.

But it’s easy to become isolated and lose touch with them.

Your friends might be too embarrassed to ask about your cancer. They may not want to intrude on your privacy, or upset you. Maybe they don’t know how to behave. Some people are afraid of cancer and just don’t want to talk about it.

If you want to tell your friends what’s happening, you may have to break the ice.

You don’t have to tell them all the details if you don’t want to. It’s up to you how much to say.

You can also make new friends by joining self help and support groups. Because they have experienced cancer too, the people there will understand what you’re going through.

Friends often want to help in practical ways and this can have real benefits for everyone. See page 23 for tips on building your support team.

‘I do believe men should reach out more for help. I think we find it more difficult because society encourages us to be more self-reliant – and that’s usually a positive thing.’

Your family and friends can phone the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 for information, advice and support.

We can also help you find local self help or support groups. Call the Macmillan CancerLine or check our website on www.macmillan.org.uk

Your carers

When you have cancer, relatives and friends often step in to help you through your illness.

It can be hard to accept their help, especially if your old roles are reversed. But the experience can also bring you closer, and create a stronger bond.

Try to hold onto the relationship you had before. You are still their partner, father, son or friend.

Also, make sure your carer looks after their own emotional wellbeing and physical health. Encourage them to keep up with activities that bring them pleasure, and to stay in touch with other people.

The doctors and nurses who look after you can also refer your carer to other professionals for:

- health care that they need
- emotional support
- help with practical issues like managing the home and finances.

Some hospitals offer complementary therapies, such as massage, for carers as well as for people with cancer. So do some Macmillan cancer information and support centres.

Your carer might like to join a local self help or support group, where they can talk to other people with similar experiences.

It's also worth looking into extra benefits they could claim, such as Carer's Allowance.

Help for carers

Your carer is welcome to call the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 for information, advice and support.

To find local self help or support groups, call the Macmillan CancerLine or check the website on www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan offers a guide especially for carers called, *Hello and how are you?* This can be ordered by calling 0800 500 800.

Another source of information and support is the charity Carers UK who can be contacted on 0808 808 7777 or by visiting www.carersuk.org



5 Work and finances

Carrying on with work

Many people with cancer are keen to carry on working.

It might be a financial necessity for you, especially if you're the family breadwinner.

Staying at work gives you emotional benefits, too. It can be a relief to do something that is part of normal life. And work can give you a sense of control and pride.

If you do decide to stay at work, you will need some time off for treatment and appointments. People with cancer can get very tired, too, so you may need to allow for this.

Talk to your manager and / or personnel (human resources) officer about all your options for time off. These might include sick leave, compassionate leave, or statutory sick pay. You might be able to use your holiday time or take additional unpaid leave.

You might also be able to reduce your working hours or take on lighter duties for a while.

If you do decide to leave your job, get advice before you resign. Your pensions and eligibility for benefits could be affected.

If your carer is working, much of the above advice applies to them as well. They might be able to get carer's leave. And they have a legal right to request flexible working so they can look after you.

Telling colleagues

You may think it's best to keep your cancer a secret at work. However, remember that telling others can help them understand what you're going through.

Set up a private meeting with your manager, to tell them you have cancer.

You and your manager can agree what to tell other people at work, and how to tell them.

You can still keep your privacy. It's up to you how much should remain confidential.

Your rights at work

In your workplace, you are protected by various laws on health and safety, employment and personal data.

People with cancer are also protected by the Disability Discrimination Act. This law covers all stages of employment, from when you apply for a job until you leave one.

It is unlawful for an employer to treat you less favourably because of your cancer.

The employer has a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that you can compete for a job and do your job on an equal footing with other employees.

This law protects you from harassment and bullying.

Benefits and financial help

Having cancer can put a real strain on your finances.

You may have to stop work, at least for a while. Your partner or others in your household may also need time off to care for you.

Cancer and work

Macmillan has an employee's guide to cancer at work. There is also a tool kit for employers. To find out more, phone the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 or visit our website at www.macmillan.org.uk

The Equality and Human Rights Commission help people who face discrimination at work visit their website at www.equalityhumanrights.com

You'll probably have extra expenses, such as costs for travel to hospital, additional childcare, special diets and prescription charges. You might be able to get a Macmillan Grant to help cover some of these costs.

If you are struggling with the financial effects of cancer, remember that help is available.

The first step is to check you are receiving all the state benefits you are entitled to. You might be surprised by how much this can add up to.

If you are staying in work or if you have been self-employed, you might still be able to get benefits.

Your carer might be able to claim benefits, as well.

The benefits system is complicated and each individual case is different. So make sure you get advice from an independent expert on benefits.

Also, check whether any of your insurance policies will pay money to you, if you have had a cancer diagnosis.

If you belong to a professional group or trade union, they may have a fund to help members in hardship. Your union might also be able to advise you on pensions and other financial matters.

If you are worried about debt, get help from an independent expert as soon as you can. Debt has a way of growing fast, especially when the unexpected happens. There are many sources of reliable and free advice.

5 Work and finances

Get help with benefits and finances

Call the Macmillan Benefits Helpline on 0808 801 0304 for advice and to ask about Macmillan Grants.

Macmillan also has a booklet called *Help with the cost of cancer*. This can be ordered by phoning 0800 500 800 or by visiting the website www.macmillan.org.uk

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) can help you claim benefits and solve money problems. You can find your local CAB office by visiting www.citizensadvice.org.uk

National Debtline is there for people with debt worries. You can find in-depth information on their website www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

An independent financial adviser can inform you about pensions and insurance. To find a local independent financial adviser visit www.unbiased.co.uk.



6 Information and support

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan can offer you information, advice and support through a wide range of services.

Macmillan CancerLine

Our specialist advisers offer confidential advice and help you find the information you need.

Freephone 0808 808 2020
Textphone 0808 808 0121
Monday to Friday 9am-9pm
Calls are free
Email
cancerline@macmillan.org.uk

South Asian CancerLine

Hindi – 0808 808 0100
Punjabi – 0808 808 0101
Urdu – 0808 808 0102
Monday to Friday 9am-6pm
Calls are free

Macmillan YouthLine

Macmillan's YouthLine is available for young people aged 12 to 21.

Freephone 0808 808 0800
Monday to Friday 9am-9pm
Calls are free
Email
youthline@macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan Benefits Helpline

The Macmillan Benefits Helpline is a telephone advice service for people with cancer, their family and carers who need help to access benefits and other kinds of financial support.

Freephone 0808 801 0304
Monday, Tuesday, Friday
10am-5pm
Wednesday 12pm-5pm
Calls are free

6 Information and support

Macmillan self help and support groups

We support over 750 independent cancer self help and support groups across the UK.

Contact Macmillan CancerLine or email
cancerline@macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan cancer information and support centres and mobile centres

Visit one of our centres where you will find clear information and face-to-face support.

Contact Macmillan CancerLine or email
cancerline@macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan publications

We produce publications about day to day practical and emotional issues. These are available free to anyone affected by cancer.

To order call 0800 500 800 or visit our website at
www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan website

Our website provides detailed information on all our sources of support as well as a forum where you can share your experiences.

www.macmillan.org.uk

Living with cancer course

This is a free six-week course for people living with cancer, run by trained tutors who have had cancer themselves.

To find out more, contact CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 or visit the website at
www.macmillan.org.uk

General cancer information and help

Cancerbackup

Helps people affected by cancer, their families and friends. Qualified cancer nurses provide information, emotional support and advice by telephone or letter. Provides booklets, fact sheets, a newsletter, website and CD-ROM. 3 Bath Place
Rivington Street
London EC2A 3JR
Freephone 0808 800 1234
Fax 020 7696 9002
Email info@cancerbackup.org
www.cancerbackup.org.uk

Cancer Research UK

Is the leading funder of cancer research in the UK. Provides information about cancer, cancer care and clinical trials for new treatments.

PO Box 123
Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3PX
Freephone 0808 800 4040
www.cancerhelp.org.uk
www.cancerresearchuk.org

NHS Direct

The National Health Service information service.

Freephone information lines:
England NHS Direct 0845 4647
Scotland NHS 24 0845 424 2424
Wales NHS Direct 0845 4647
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
www.nhs24.com

Male cancers

Everyman

Provides information about testicular and prostate cancer.

Freephone 0800 731 9468
Email everyman@icr.ac.uk
www.everyman-campaign.org

Prostate Cancer Charity

Provides support and information to anyone concerned about prostate cancer via a range of free information leaflets, a nurse-led helpline and a network of volunteers.

3 Angel Walk
Hammersmith
London W6 9HX
Helpline 0800 074 8383
Fax 020 8222 7639
info@prostate-cancer.org.uk
www.prostate-cancer.org.uk

Orchid Cancer Appeal

Provides information about prostate, testicular and penile cancers, plus regular newsletters.

www.orchid-cancer.org.uk

NICE

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence produces guidelines for NHS cancer treatment in England and Wales.

www.nice.org.uk

SIGN

The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) produces guidelines for NHS cancer treatment in Scotland.

www.sign.ac.uk

Cancer Black Care

Offers practical and emotional support, addressing the cultural and emotional needs of black and ethnic minority people affected by cancer, their friends and family and carers.

79 Acton Lane
London NW10 8UT
Tel 020 8961 4151
Fax 020 8961 4152
info@cancerblackcare.org
www.cancerblackcare.org

6 Information and support

Emotions and relationships

Samaritans

Provides confidential emotional support 24 hours a day to those experiencing despair, distress or suicidal feelings.

PO Box 9080
Stirling FK8 2SA
Tel 0845 790 9090
Email jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org

SANE

SANE gives information and emotional support to people affected by mental health problems.

SANEline 0845 767 8000
Email sanemail@sane.org.uk
www.sane.org.uk

Relate

Offers counselling for couples in all kinds of relationships, regardless of marital status or sexuality, including men from the gay community.

Tel 0845 456 1310
www.relate.org.uk

Royal College of Psychiatrists

Website provides facts about many mental health topics, including the emotional effects of serious illness.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

6 Information and support

Carers

Carers UK

Information and support to people caring for relatives and friends. Free leaflets and information sheets are available.

20-25 Glasshouse Yard
London EC1A 4JT
Carers Line 0808 808 7777
Tel 020 7490 8818
Fax 020 7490 8824
info@carersuk.org
www.carersuk.org

Crossroads

Over 200 schemes across England and Wales which provide a range of services for carers, including in the home (by paid, trained care workers) to enable the carer to have a break.

10 Regent Place
Rugby
Warwickshire CV21 2PN
Helpline 0845 450 0350
Fax 0845 450 6556
communications@crossroads.org.uk
www.crossroads.org.uk

6 Information and support

Work and finances

Citizens Advice Bureau/Citizens Advice Scotland

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provide free confidential and independent advice and information on many important issues, including legal rights, benefits, personal finances and NHS services. Advice is given in person or by telephone. Check the website or telephone directory for your local branch.

www.adviceguide.org.uk
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

National Debtline

Provides free, confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems.

Tel 0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Independent Financial Advisers

Independent financial advisers give professional guidance on issues including pensions and insurance.

www.unbiased.co.uk

Government Online

Information about employment, disability, benefits, carers and many other topics.

www.direct.gov.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Provides advice and has the power to enforce disability laws.

England 0845 762 2633
Scotland 0845 604 5510
Wales 0845 604 8810
www.equalityhumanrights.com



Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer. We provide practical, medical, emotional and financial support and push for better cancer care. One in three of us will get cancer. 1.2 million of us are living with it. We are all affected by cancer. We can all help. We are Macmillan.

For further copies, call us on 0800 500 800 or visit www.be.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support
89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ
Tel 0800 500 800
CancerLine 0808 808 2020
www.macmillan.org.uk

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