

Managing my symptoms

Cancer can cause many different symptoms. Some symptoms only happen with certain cancers. Others may be caused by cancer treatment (side effects). Side effects normally improve after treatment finishes, but sometimes they can be long-term or permanent. Sometimes there are side effects that may happen long after treatment has ended (late effects).

The thought of side effects can be frightening, but there are ways to help manage them and many people who can help you. Your healthcare team will explain the possible side effects to you. They may also give you written information.

Many different areas of your life can be affected by cancer and its treatment. Everyone's experience is different. You might find you have many different emotions. You might also need to take a break from work and you may need support with your finances.

Tips for managing my symptoms

- If you are worried about a symptom or side effect, do not wait until your next appointment. When you start treatment, you will be given details of who to call. This is usually a 24-hour helpline at your hospital. It can help to have some information about your treatment that you can share. This can let hospital staff know which side effects are expected.
- You may find it useful to keep a record of your symptoms and side effects. This can help you talk to your doctors and nurses.
- If your symptoms are difficult to treat, your doctor may refer you to a specialist who deals with symptom control.
- If you have pain, it can almost always be reduced. The earlier treatment is started for pain, the more effective it will be.
- Being physically active may give you more energy. It can also improve your appetite and help you sleep better.
- Eating well and keeping to a healthy weight can help you keep or regain your strength.
- Watching TV, listening to music or talking to a friend can help distract you from your symptoms.
- Talk to someone who is a good listener. This may be a friend, partner or family member, your doctor or nurse, or a professional counsellor or psychologist.
- You may want to join a self-help or support group. 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.
- Complementary therapies can help some people cope with symptoms, help them relax and reduce tension and anxiety.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resources:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS • British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) • The British Pain Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.nhs.uk • www.bacp.co.uk Tel 0145 588 3300 • www.britishpainsociety.org Tel 020 7269 7840 Email info@britishpainsociety.org

Further information

macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk

- **Managing the symptoms of cancer**
- **Managing cancer pain**
- **Side effects of cancer treatment**
- **How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer**

More information and support

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

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these, visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.