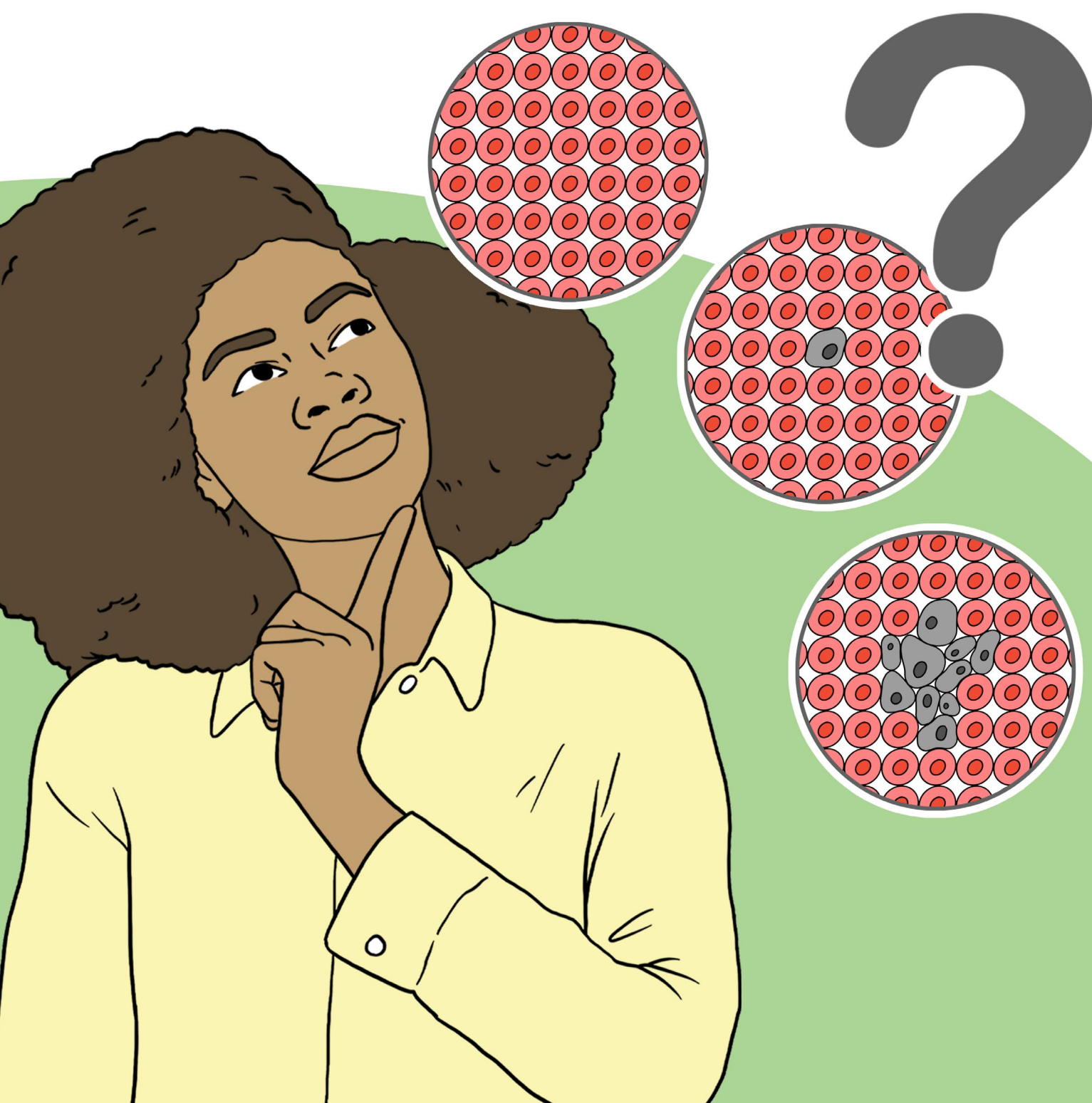


In partnership with

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

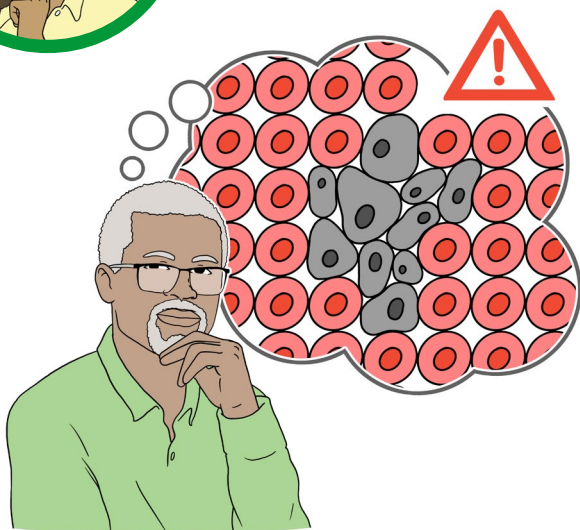
easy
read

What is cancer?

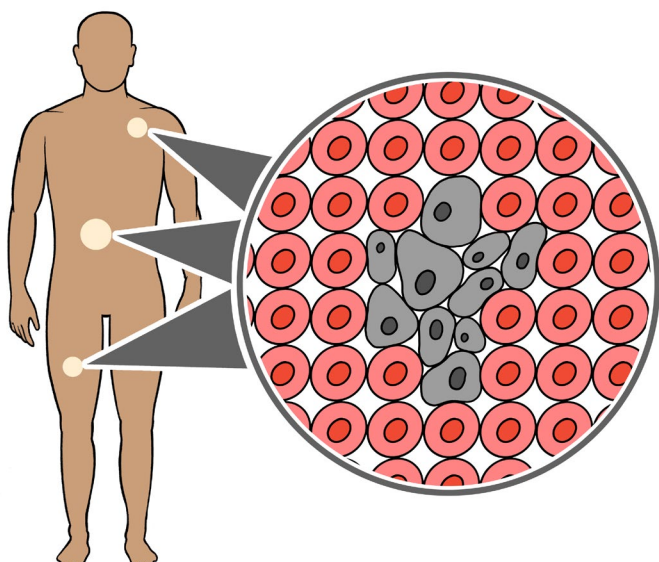




About this easy read booklet



This booklet is about what cancer is.



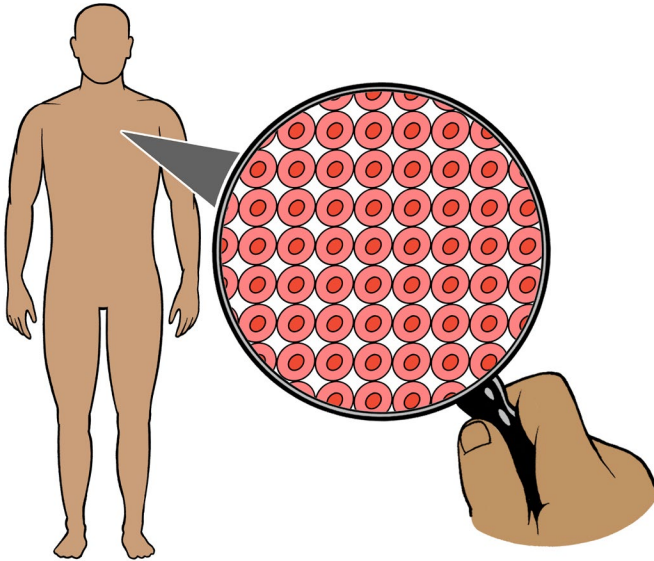
You can learn about how cancer affects your body.



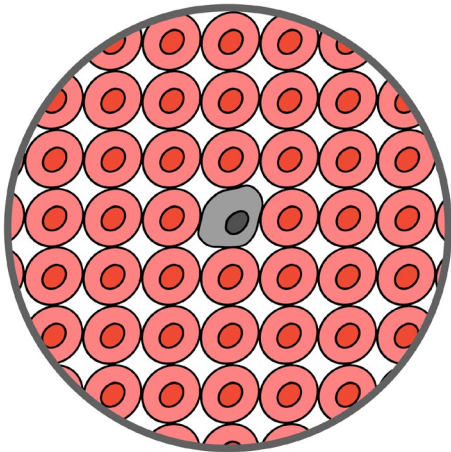
If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.



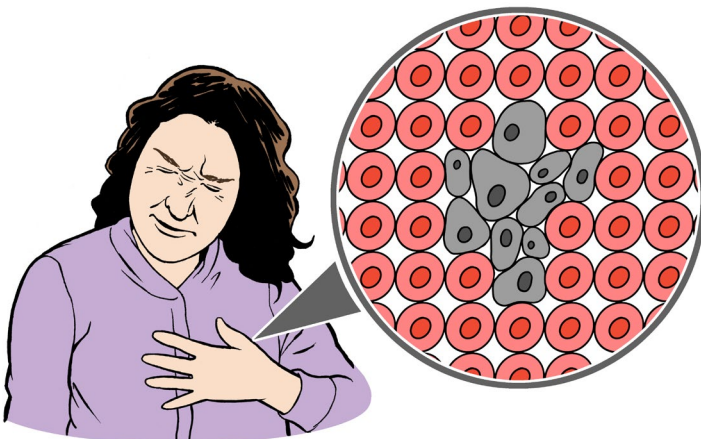
What is cancer?



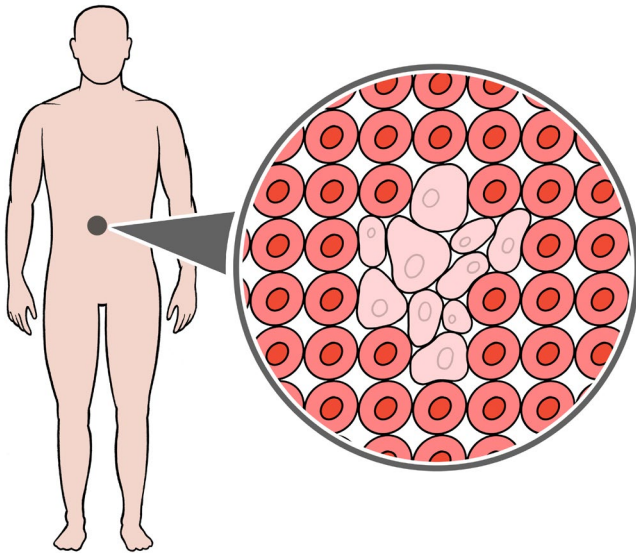
Your body is made up of lots of tiny building blocks called cells.



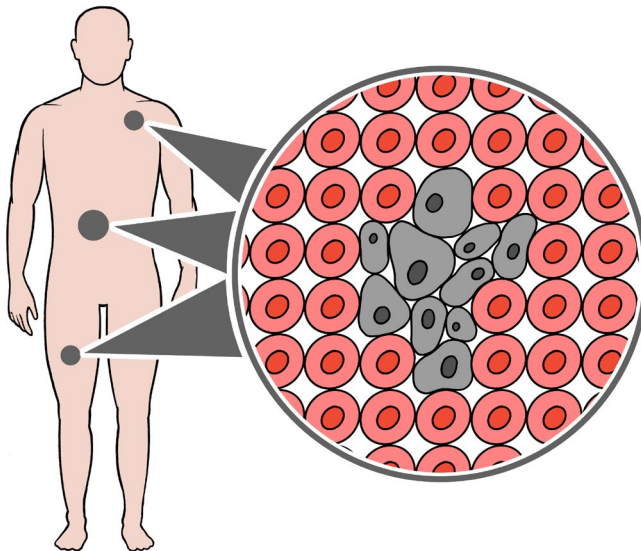
Sometimes cells can change and go wrong.



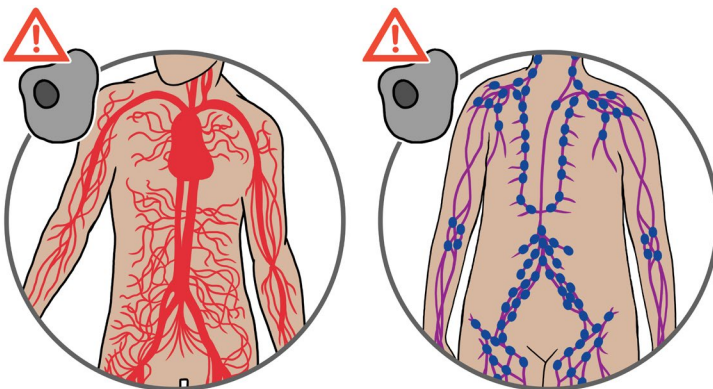
When cells go wrong, they can grow and spread into a lump. This is called a **tumour**.



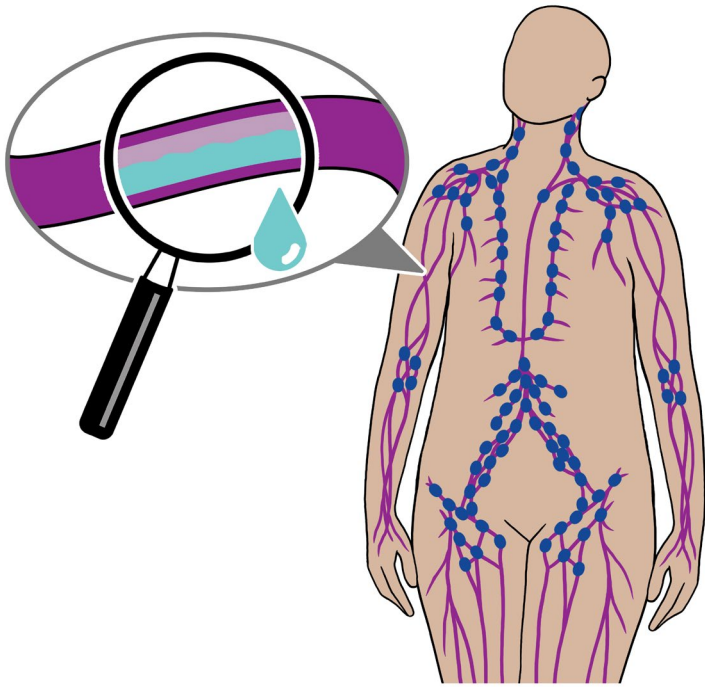
Some tumours are **benign**. They are not cancer and do not usually cause problems. They can grow but they do not spread to different parts of the body.



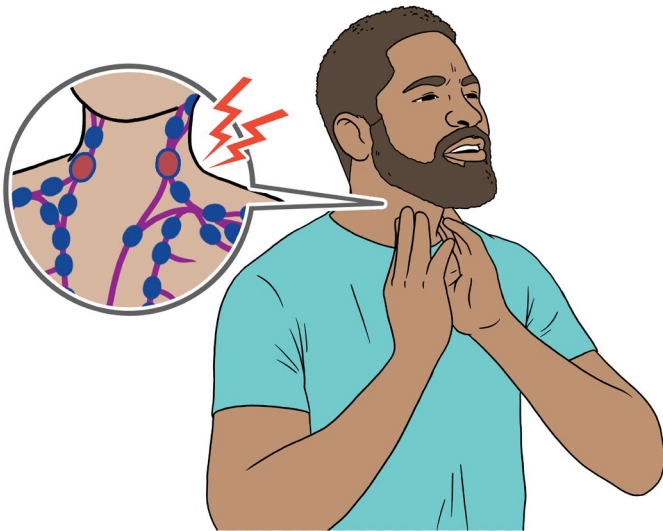
Other tumours are **malignant**. They are cancer. They can grow and spread to different parts of the body.



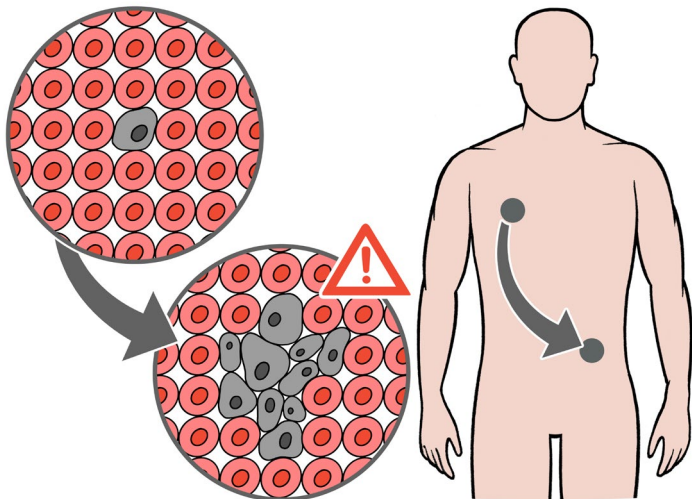
When cancer cells spread to another part of the body they travel in the blood or the **lymphatic system**.



The **lymphatic system** helps protect us from infection. It is a system of small tubes with fluid travelling through them. The tubes are connected to glands called **lymph nodes**.



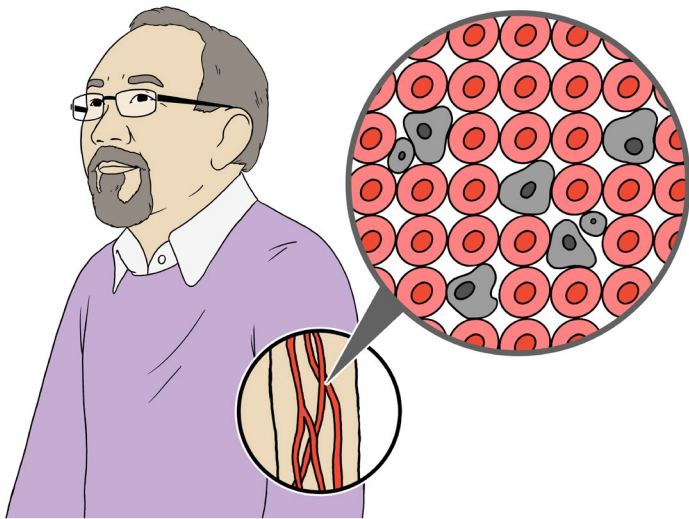
Sometimes you can feel your **lymph nodes** when you are not well. They can be sore or big for a short time while they fight the infection.



When cancer cells reach another part of the body they may begin to grow and form another tumour.



If you notice a lymph node that is big but does not hurt, you should get it checked by your doctor.



Your blood is also made of cells. When you get cancer in your blood the cells do not work properly, but they do not make a lump.



Cancer can make you feel unwell or different from usual.



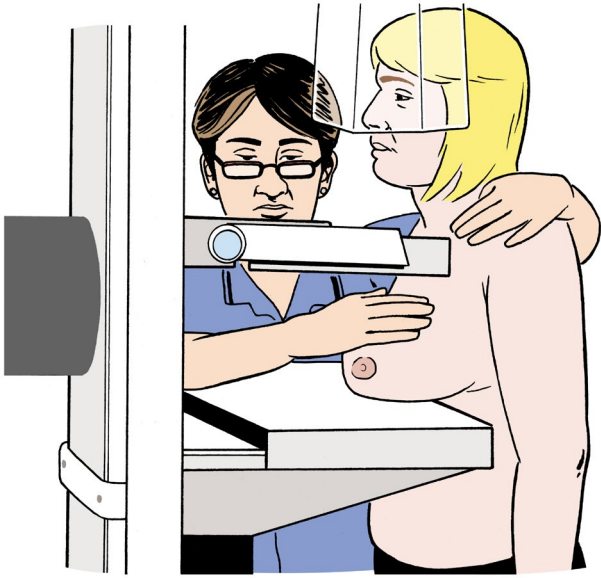
Look for any changes in your body that are different from usual.



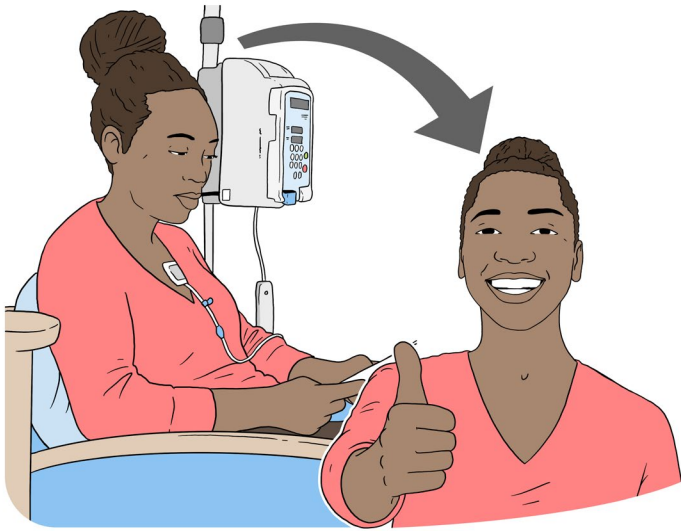
It is important to tell your doctor about any changes or worries you have as soon as possible.



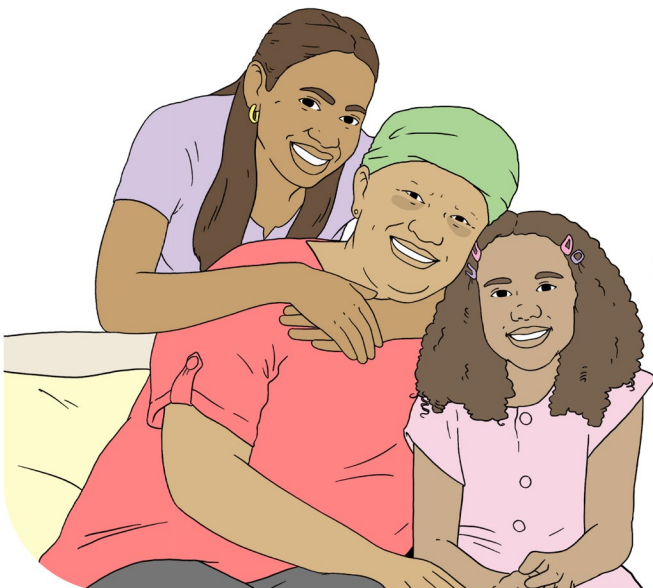
Some people can have cancer and not feel ill. Even when people feel well they may be offered a health check to look for cancer. This is called **screening**.



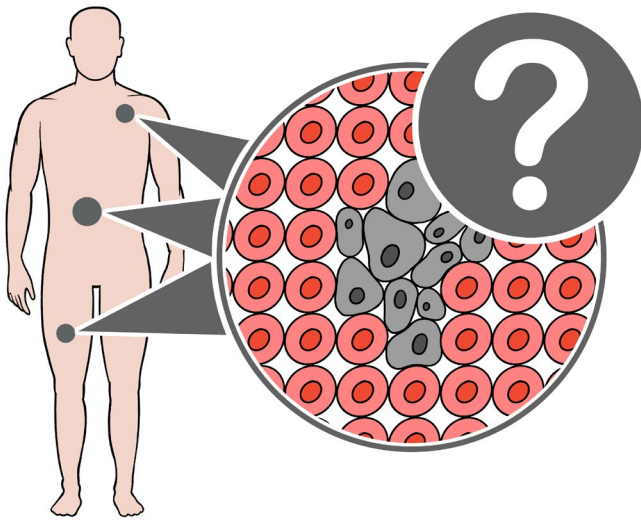
Screening means having tests to look for early signs of cancer.



If cancer is found early, it can often be treated before it causes problems.



You can not get cancer from someone else. And you can not give it to anyone.



Most of the time, we do not know why a person gets cancer.

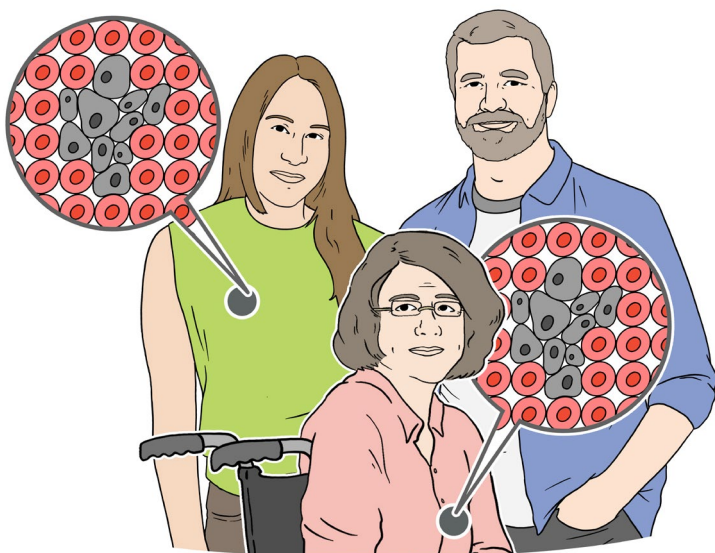


There are things that can make some people more at risk of cancer. These are called **risk factors**. Getting older is a risk factor.



Other risk factors can be:

- smoking
- your diet
- how active you are
- how much time you have spent in the sun.



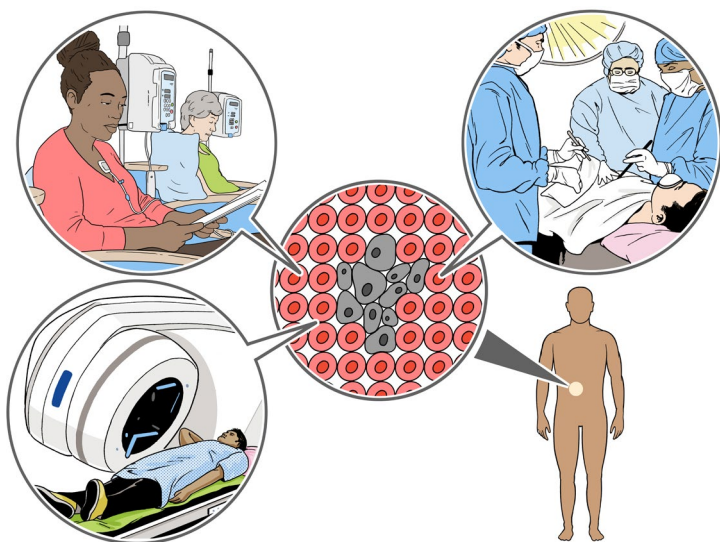
Some cancers are more common in some families.



Having a healthy life can help lower the risk of getting cancer.



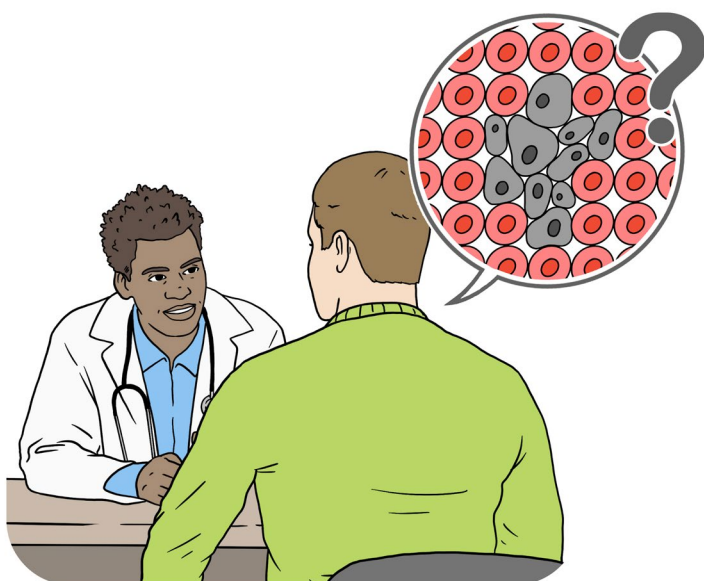
This means eating a healthy diet, doing exercise, not smoking and not drinking too much alcohol.



Cancer can be serious, but there are treatments that can help.



You can learn more about staying healthy and different cancer treatments from our other booklets.



If you want to talk about cancer, your doctor or nurse can help. They can answer your questions and help with any worries you have.



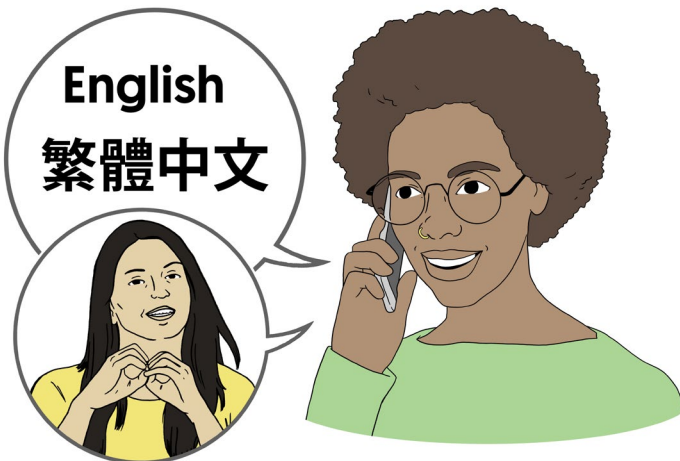
How Macmillan can help you



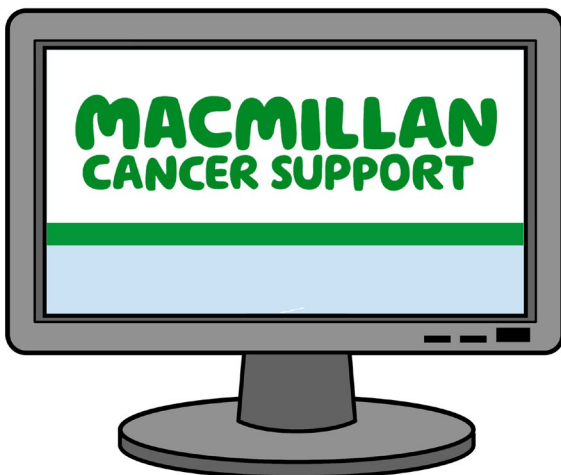
You can get support from:

The Macmillan Support Line

Call **0808 808 00 00** 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.

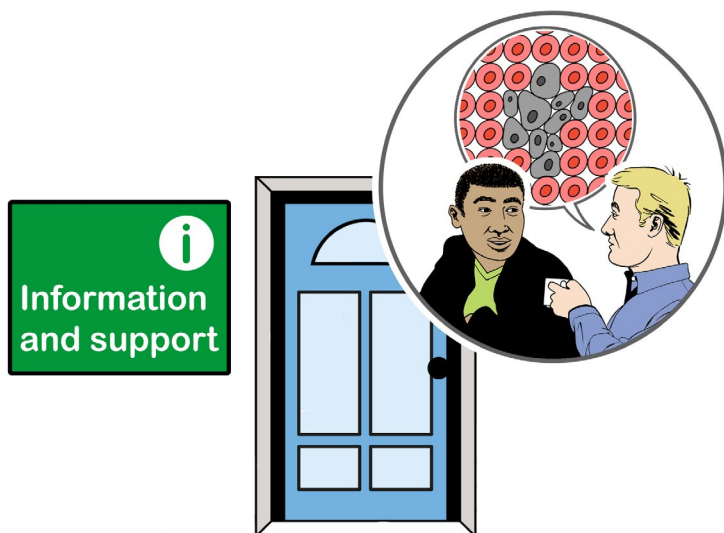


You can speak to us in your language, including British Sign Language (BSL). Just tell us what you need when you start the call.



The Macmillan website

Visit **macmillan.org.uk** for information about cancer. You can also use our web chat to ask questions at **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**



Information centres

You can talk to a cancer support specialist and get written information. Find your nearest centre at

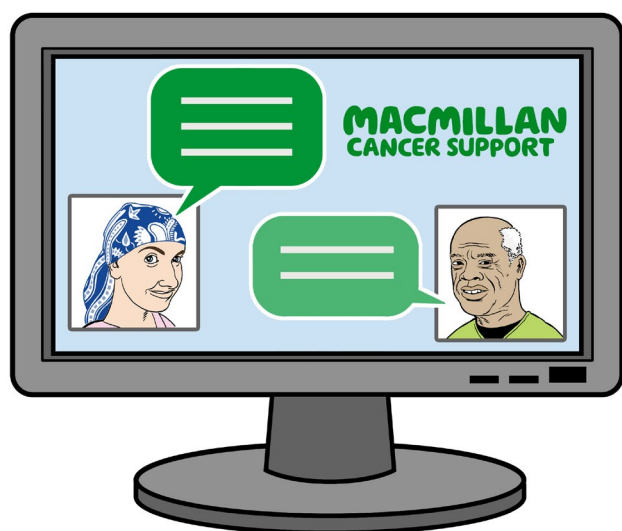
macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres or call us.



Local support groups

Find a group near you at

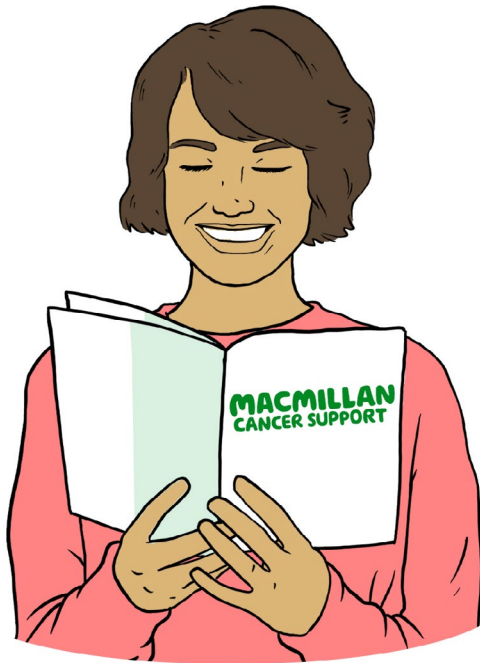
macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups or call us.



Macmillan Online Community

You can talk to other people in similar situations at

macmillan.org.uk/community



Macmillan can give you information in different ways:

Booklets about cancer

You can order booklets about cancer from

orders.macmillan.org.uk



Videos

You can watch videos about cancer at

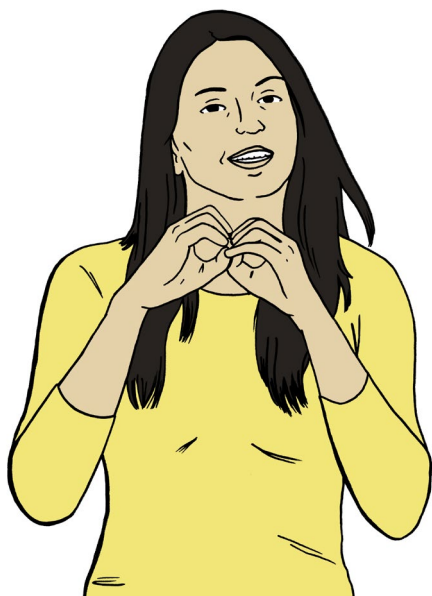
macmillan.org.uk/videos



Audio

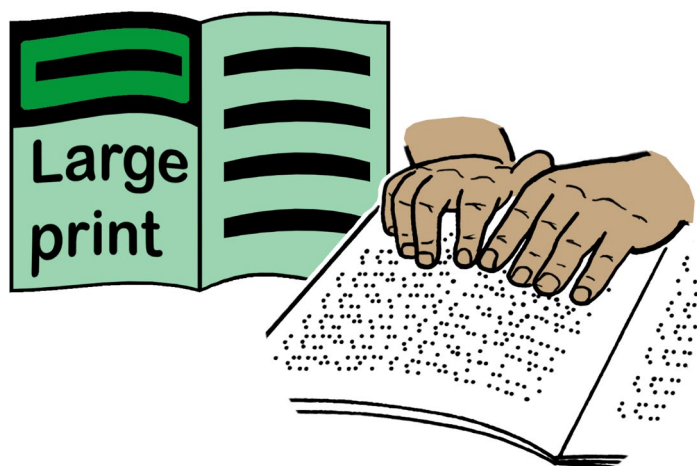
You can listen to information about cancer from

macmillan.org.uk/audio



British Sign Language (BSL)

You can watch information in BSL at macmillan.org.uk/bsl



Large print or Braille

Tell us if you need information in large print or Braille.

Email: informationproductionteam@macmillan.org.uk



Translations

Tell us if you need information in another language.

Email: informationproductionteam@macmillan.org.uk



More easy read booklets



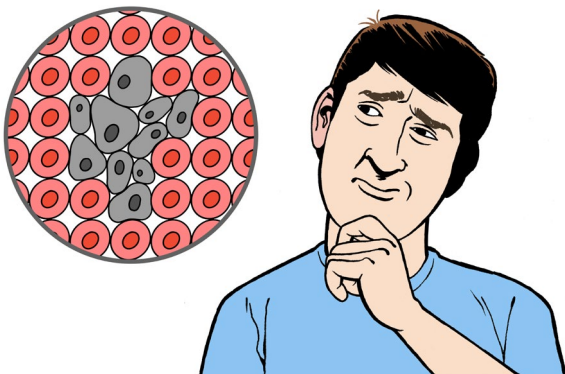
Order more easy read booklets from [macmillan.org.uk/easyread](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/easyread)

There are booklets on lots of topics:



About Macmillan

- How Macmillan Cancer Support can help you
- Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA)



About cancer

- Bowel cancer
- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer
- What is cancer?



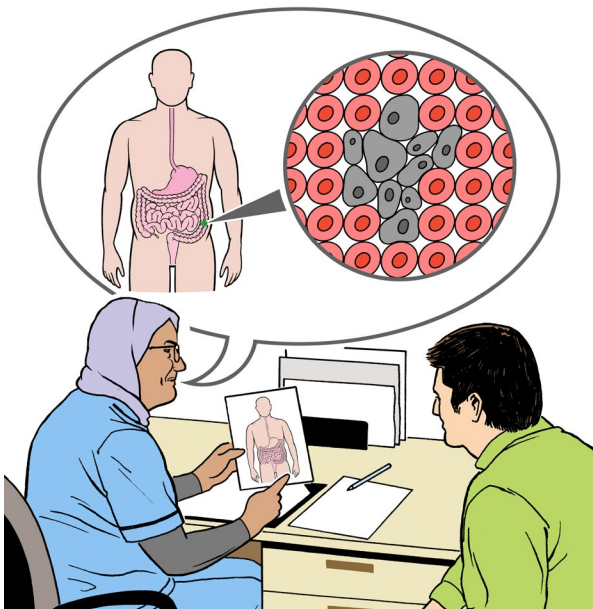
Signs and symptoms

- Breast care and screening
- Cervical screening (smear test)
- How to check your balls (testicles)
- Symptoms of cervical cancer



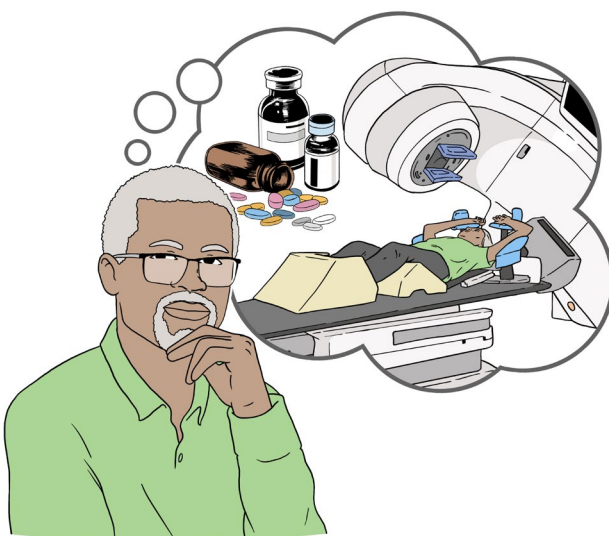
Tests for cancer

- Having a biopsy
- Having a colonoscopy
- Having a CT scan
- Having an endoscopy
- Having examinations and blood tests
- Having an MRI scan
- Having an ultrasound
- Having an x-ray



Being told you have cancer

- Finding out you have cancer
- Getting your test results
- Seeing the doctor



Deciding on your treatment

- All about me – notes for my healthcare team
- Deciding about treatment
- How to get equal healthcare
- If you are unhappy with your care



Treatment for cancer

- Chemotherapy
- Giving your consent
- Having surgery
- Radiotherapy
- Side effects from chemotherapy
- Side effects from radiotherapy



Living a healthy life

- Alcohol and your health
- Be safe in the sun
- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Have safer sex



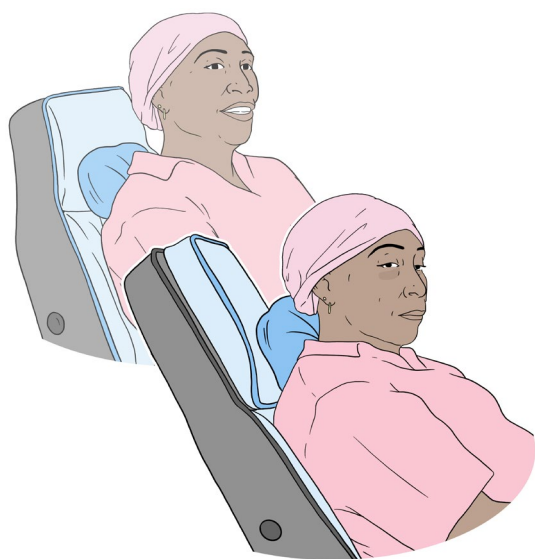
Living with cancer

- Claiming benefits when you have cancer
- Complementary therapies
- Help with costs when you have cancer
- LGBTQ+ people and cancer
- Talking about cancer and your feelings



Living with cancer

- What happens after cancer treatment ends
- Work and cancer
- Your sex life and cancer
- Your social life and cancer



End of life

- Changes that can happen at the end of life
- Choosing where to die
- Things you can do when getting ready to die
- Thinking about your funeral
- Who can help if you are dying
- Your feelings when you are dying



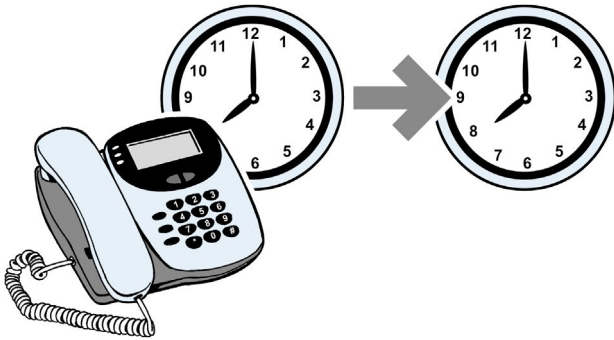
After someone dies

- Going to a funeral when someone dies
- Your feelings when someone dies and what can help

To order easy read booklets like this one go to the website macmillan.org.uk/easyread or call us on **0808 808 00 00**

This booklet is about cancer.

It is for anyone who finds easier words and pictures helpful. If you have more questions about cancer or would like to talk to us, call the Macmillan Support Line.



- Call us free on:
0808 808 00 00
7 days a week from 8am to 8pm.



- If you use a textphone, you can call:
18001 0808 808 00 00



- Or go to the website:
macmillan.org.uk

This easy read booklet has been produced by Macmillan Cancer Support working with CHANGE.

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**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**