

# Hot flushes or sweating

Some cancer treatments can cause hot flushes and sweats.

Hot flushes can feel different for different people. Your face may feel slightly warm. Or you may have night sweats affecting your whole body. You might also feel your heart beating faster (palpitations). A flush usually lasts for about 4 to 5 minutes.

They are often caused by treatments that lower the levels of hormones called oestrogen or testosterone in the body. Hormonal therapy treatments are most commonly used to treat breast cancer and prostate cancer. They may also be used to treat other types of cancer.

Some other types of treatment can cause an early menopause, or symptoms similar to the menopause. Hot flushes and sweats are the most common symptoms of the menopause.

Menopause usually happens between the ages of 45 to 55. Types of treatment that can cause the early menopause include:

- chemotherapy, especially if you are close to your natural menopause
- surgery to remove the ovaries
- radiotherapy to the pelvis.

If you find hot flushes or sweating difficult to manage, talk to your cancer doctor or specialist nurse. They may be able to give you medication to help manage the hot flushes. They can also give you advice to help you cope.

## Tips for managing hot flushes and sweats

- Write down when you have a flush, to help understand what may trigger them.
- Clothes and bedsheets made of natural fabrics, such as cotton, can help keep you cool.
- Dress in layers, so you can remove clothes when you need to.
- Use layers of bedding that you can easily take off during the night.
- Keep the room cool or use a fan.
- Choose cold drinks rather than hot ones, and drink less alcohol.
- If you smoke, try to stop or smoke less.
- If you are overweight, try to lose weight, if it is safe for you to.
- Talk to your doctor about medicines to reduce hot flushes and sweats.
- Try complementary therapies, such as controlled breathing or yoga. Before you start a complementary therapy, talk to your cancer doctor or specialist nurse. Some complementary therapies may affect your cancer treatment.

## Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk) such as:

- [Cancer and complementary therapies](#)
- [Understanding breast cancer in women](#)
- [Understanding advanced \(metastatic\) prostate cancer](#)
- [Understanding locally advanced prostate cancer](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

## Further Macmillan 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](http://macmillan.org.uk) where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

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.

Our free [Macmillan Buddy service](#) can arrange weekly calls or visits with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#).

## Other useful contact details

- Daisy Network – visit [daisynetwork.org](http://daisynetwork.org)
- British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA) – visit [www.bcma.co.uk](http://www.bcma.co.uk)

## Notes and questions

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