

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

**GET
ACTIVE
FEEL GOOD**

Move more
Your complete guide to becoming more active





If you're living with or after cancer and want to make a positive change to your life, this pack will help you do just that. This is your step-by-step guide to becoming more active. Work through the pack gradually building up the amount of physical activity you do and you'll soon start to feel the benefits of a more active lifestyle.

This pack includes:

- Our booklet, ***Physical activity and cancer treatment***. This booklet looks in detail at the benefits of being physically active during and after cancer treatment and the types of activity that are recommended for you.
- ***Getting started***, our guide to help you lead a more active lifestyle. This includes top tips on choosing what to do, how to set goals and where to find activities near you.
- A ***physical activity diary*** to help you plan your activities, set goals and record your progress.
- ***Contact details*** for other organisations that can help you get active.
- ***10 top tips*** to get active and stay active.

Please fill out the following forms. You can save data typed into the forms and print them off or you can print a blank copy.

You can find more useful resources on our website at macmillan.org.uk/movemore



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Introduction

Physical activity varies from day-to-day activities, like walking and gardening, to more structured exercise programmes, like fitness classes at the gym. There are lots of ways you can begin to be more active, and even the smallest increase in your physical activity can improve your quality of life.

How much and what type of activities you choose to do will depend on your interests, your individual situation (for example, your cancer type, your treatment and any other long term conditions you may have) and your level of fitness.

If you haven't been very active for a while or are new to being active, this pack will help you set goals that are realistic and achievable. We've included some tips to help you get started, goal setting techniques, inspirational stories from other people affected by cancer who've begun leading an active lifestyle and lots more.

Remember you can ask for advice from your cancer specialist or GP if you have any questions about becoming more active. They may refer you to an exercise specialist or physiotherapist.

Physical activity and cancer treatment

Whether you're used to being active or new to it, regular physical activity can help you feel better in lots of ways. You may be a little nervous about getting started – that's understandable. But any amount of physical activity is better than none.

People living with and after cancer are advised to avoid being inactive (spending a lot of time resting) and return to normal daily activities as soon as possible.

If you're living with or after cancer, being physically active is safe and has lots of benefits. Knowing about these can give you the motivation to keep going.

Physical activity can:

- help you manage some of the side effects of cancer treatment, such as:
 - reducing cancer-related fatigue
 - reducing stress and anxiety
 - improving low mood or depression
 - improving bone health and helping prevent osteoporosis
 - improving heart health
 - building muscle strength
 - helping to maintain a healthy weight.
- lower your chances of developing other health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, stroke or even a new cancer.
- improve your quality of life and increase your life expectancy.

For some cancer types, including breast cancer and bowel cancer, being active may also lower your risk of the cancer coming back.

Gradually build up your physical activity level in line with health recommendations. You can find out more about the physical activity recommendations when you're living with or after cancer on our [website](#). These pages will also help you think about being active based on your situation and the treatment you may be having.



SAROJ'S STORY

'I used to find it difficult to make time for exercise – I was always busy working. I enjoyed gardening and would occasionally take part in exercise classes in my spare time. In 2002, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. After my treatment, I was very weak and it was hard to get myself up and about. I tried to get back to my old way of life, but I didn't have the energy or motivation to do things like gardening anymore.

I wanted to build up my strength and be more active. I'd left my job and had a lot more free time, so I started to teach myself hula dancing and took a course in Pranayama Yoga. These involved very gentle movements, which allowed me to slowly improve my strength and fitness. I've really benefited from them, both mentally and physically. When I was dancing, the music helped to calm my mind – I'd close my eyes and I could picture myself on a sandy beach. This gave me a real sense of joy, happiness and lifted my moods.

I now teach yoga classes once a week. Some of the people I teach have also been affected by cancer. It's helped them to gradually build their strength and return to a more normal way of life. Keeping active and focusing on teaching yoga has really changed my life – it's given me the motivation to help others and confidence to run a cancer support group.'



'When I was dancing, the music helped to calm my mind.'

Saroj, 66, diagnosed with breast cancer

Getting started

When you're making an important lifestyle change, it can be helpful to think about why you're doing it and what you'd like to achieve.

Here are some questions to help get you started:

1. What are your top three reasons for becoming more active?

For example, "I want to get back to work as soon as possible", "I want to play with my children/grandchildren".

(a)

(b)

(c)

2. What would life be like for you if you decided to become more active?

Think about what might be different for you and how you would feel. For example, "I would have more energy", "I would feel better".

3. Imagine you decided not to become more active, but stay as you are. What would life be like for you?

For example, "I would need to rely on other people to help me get around", "I wouldn't have much energy".



'The first problem I wanted to sort out was the early-morning depression. I now do a lot of walking, about nine miles a week, three at a time. And when I come in from that the depression's gone for the day.'

Alfie Cook, diagnosed with prostate cancer

Simple ways to be more active

There are a number of ways that you can become more active. It's important to do something you enjoy and that fits in with your life.

This could be going dancing with friends, playing with your children or grandchildren in the park, gardening or walking to the shops. Or it may mean reducing the time you spend sitting or lying down by being more active around the house. You'll know how much and what types of physical activities feel right for you.

You could:

- ask your GP to be referred to a structured exercise on referral programme for people with long-term conditions at a gym
- ask your GP to be referred to a physiotherapist
- join a walking group, or use a pedometer to record how far you're walking
- walk or cycle to the shops, to see friends or to work
- try some stretching exercise like yoga, Tai Chi or Pilates
- be more active around the house, by doing housework.

You could also swim, dance or do some gardening, or try taking up a sport like badminton, table tennis or bowls.

Read more about the types of activities that might be best for you on our website.

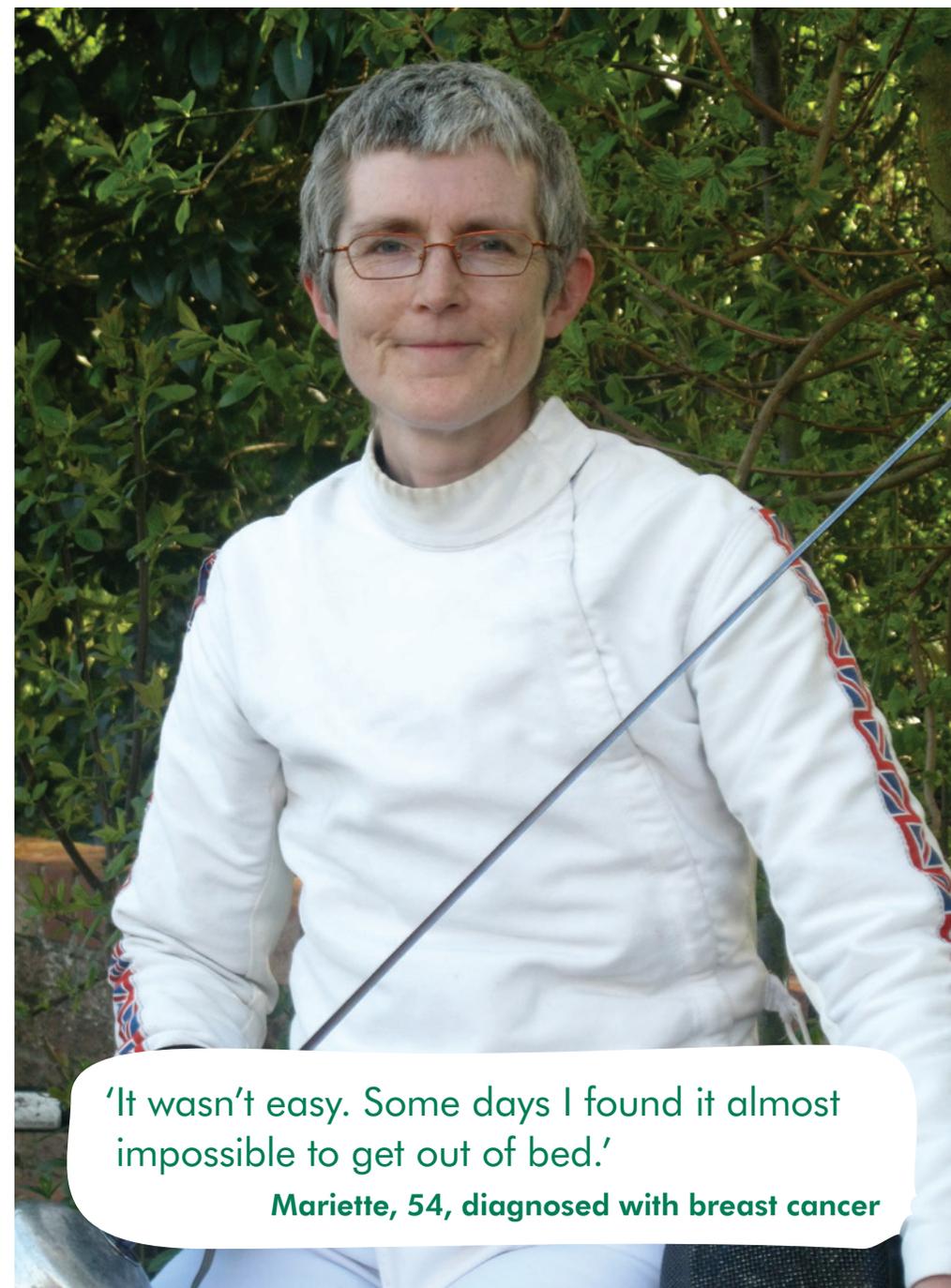
MARIETTE'S STORY

'When I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010, I was devastated. I'd had breast cancer 21 years ago and couldn't believe that I was going to have to go through it again. Before my diagnosis I'd kept myself fit. I love fencing and had represented England in competitions.'

Throughout my cancer treatment I worked hard to stay active, as it was important for me to carry on competing in fencing championships. I decided to join a gym where I followed a fitness programme designed by my personal trainer. I worked with him to build up my stamina and increase my fitness level.

It wasn't easy. Some days I found it almost impossible to get out of bed. But I continued to focus on my ultimate goal of competing in the European Veterans' Fencing Championships. This gave me the motivation I needed to stay positive and to continue with my training.

Focusing on my physical fitness has been so important for me. It's one of the only things that kept me going through my second experience of breast cancer. I've carried on training and have recently been able to fulfil my dream to compete at the European Veterans' Fencing Championships 2011. Stepping out for my first fight felt wonderful, as I'd actually made it.'



'It wasn't easy. Some days I found it almost impossible to get out of bed.'

Mariette, 54, diagnosed with breast cancer

Physical activity in your area

There are lots of different activities available to you in your area – from running and cycling, to yoga and Tai Chi.

Find out more by:

- contacting your local council for information on the activities taking place in their parks and leisure centres
- asking your cancer specialist or GP if they are able to refer you to any specialist services, like exercise on referral, falls prevention (if you are worried about falling) or physiotherapy. see our who can help section on our **website**
- contacting the national governing body for sport in your area – Sport England, Sport Wales, Sport Scotland and Sport Northern Ireland all have excellent websites with details of how to get involved in opportunities near you
- go to **macmillan.org.uk/movemore** for useful links.

How to find an activity near you

There are some comprehensive search tools available that you may find helpful:

- England has a national search tool available on NHS Choices – simply put in your postcode: **nhs.uk/letsgetmoving**
- Scotland has a national search tool available at **activescotland.org.uk**

You may find the contact details opposite useful in helping you get active.

Contact details for walking groups

Walking is a popular way to start to become active. There are free, guided health walks across the UK. You can search for a walk near you using the following details.

Walking for Health (England)
0300 060 2287
www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk

Walk Northern Ireland
028 9030 393
www.walkni.com

Paths to Health (Scotland)
01259 218 855
www.paha.org.uk

The Ramblers Association
020 7339 8500
www.ramblers.org.uk

Let's Walk (Wales)
02920 338 357
www.lets-walk-cymru.org.uk

Contact details for sport councils

The national sports councils will be able to give you contact details for individual sports governing bodies, such as British Cycling or the Amateur Swimming Association, and where to find facilities near you.

Sport England
www.sportengland.org

Sports Council for Wales
www.sports-council-wales.org.uk

Sport Scotland
www.sportscotland.org.uk

Sport Northern Ireland
www.sportni.net

Contact details for mobility and disability organisations

There are some specific organisations that can help people with mobility problems or a disability.

WheelPower
www.wheelpower.org.uk

Disability Sport Wales
www.disabilitysportwales.org

Disability Sport England
www.disabilitysport.org.uk

Inclusive Fitness Initiative
www.inclusivefitness.org gettingpeopleactive

What activities are right for you?

Before becoming more physically active, try to plan what activities you would like to do that fit with your lifestyle.

Becoming active for the first time or returning to activity during or after a condition like cancer isn't always going to be easy. It can be helpful to think in advance of the sorts of things that could get in the way of you becoming and staying more active.

1. What activities might be best for you?

Think about what you are most interested in doing. Make a list here of the different activities you could try.

2. Think about what could get in the way of you becoming and staying active.

For example, the weather, working late, feeling unwell or not feeling motivated.

3. How could you overcome these barriers to being active?

For example, having an indoor back-up plan, joining an exercise class or group, going with a relative or friend.

Setting goals

When you're trying to make a big change to your life, it can help to set personal goals.

It's important you set goals that are achievable for you. Start at a level that suits you and don't be over-ambitious. You'll know how much and what types of physical activities feel right for you. Gradually build up your level of activity, being active for longer and more often, and also try higher intensity activities if you feel able to. If you enjoy walking, try building up the length and speed of your walks over time, and try going a little more often.

You may find it helpful to set yourself a target level of activity for a few weeks or months into the future.

For example:

'In three weeks time I want to be walking for 20 minutes every day and doing one dance class each week.'

OR

'I want to go to the gym eight times over the next four weeks. I also want my arms and legs to be stronger and to feel fitter generally, with improved balance.'

If this is something that will work for you try answering the question opposite now.

If you did decide to become more active, what would you like to achieve or how would you like to be different in a few weeks' or months' time?

Have a look at the activity diary and you will see a space on the first page to write down your **future goal**. You can then refer back to it later to see how you're progressing.

Once you have set yourself a future goal, create a plan to help you work towards this. Gradually build up the amount you do to help you achieve your goal. This can help you stay motivated when you're getting started.

Look at the example below of a short term goal that will help you work towards your future goal.

I will walk **(insert activity)**, on *Saturday* **(day)** at *10am* **(time)** at *Ruskin Park* **(where)** for *20 minutes* **(duration of activity)**

Also think about a back-up plan, in case something gets in the way.

For example:

If something gets in the way, I will... *go in the morning/play wii fit at home.*

Have a go at completing your first goal now. Remember to set goals that are achievable and start at a level that suits you.

I will (activity) _____ on (day) _____ at (time) _____

at (place) _____ for (duration) _____

If something gets in the way, I will ... _____

Use the activity diary to write your short-term goals to help you work towards your future goal.

'My advice to anyone that's going through the journey of cancer is to get up and go and to create a mental picture of yourself as a happy, healthy individual.'

Joy Gillon, diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007



Keeping an activity diary

By now you may have set some goals and may have a plan for becoming more active. That's great.

Using an activity diary to record your activities can help you track your progress and stay motivated. It can also help you see whether you've set the right goals, and change them if they are too challenging or not challenging enough.

Your activity diary contains a section to write down your weekly goals and also a section to record what you actually do.

Have a look at the examples opposite, which show you how to do this.

We've included stickers here that you can use in your activity diary as you record your progress. By using your activity diary, planning your goals that help you work towards your future goal and then recording what you actually do, you'll soon see how you're improving over time and will start to feel the benefits.

MY GOAL

1. I will play golf on Saturday 26th at 10am at Pitch & Putt, Mumbles
for 40 minutes. If something gets in the way, I will go on Sunday.

WHAT I DID

Date	Time	Activity	Duration	Intensity	How I felt during or after the activity
Sat 26th	10am	Golf	60 mins	Light and moderate	Great, refreshed. Slept much better

MY GOAL

2. I will walk on Wednesday 7th at 5pm at the high street shops
for 10 minutes. If something gets in the way, I will ask my daughter to come.

WHAT I DID

Date	Time	Activity	Duration	Intensity	How I felt during or after the activity
Wed 7th	5pm	walking	15 mins	Light and moderate	Was a bit nervous, my daughter came with me, felt much more confident afterwards.

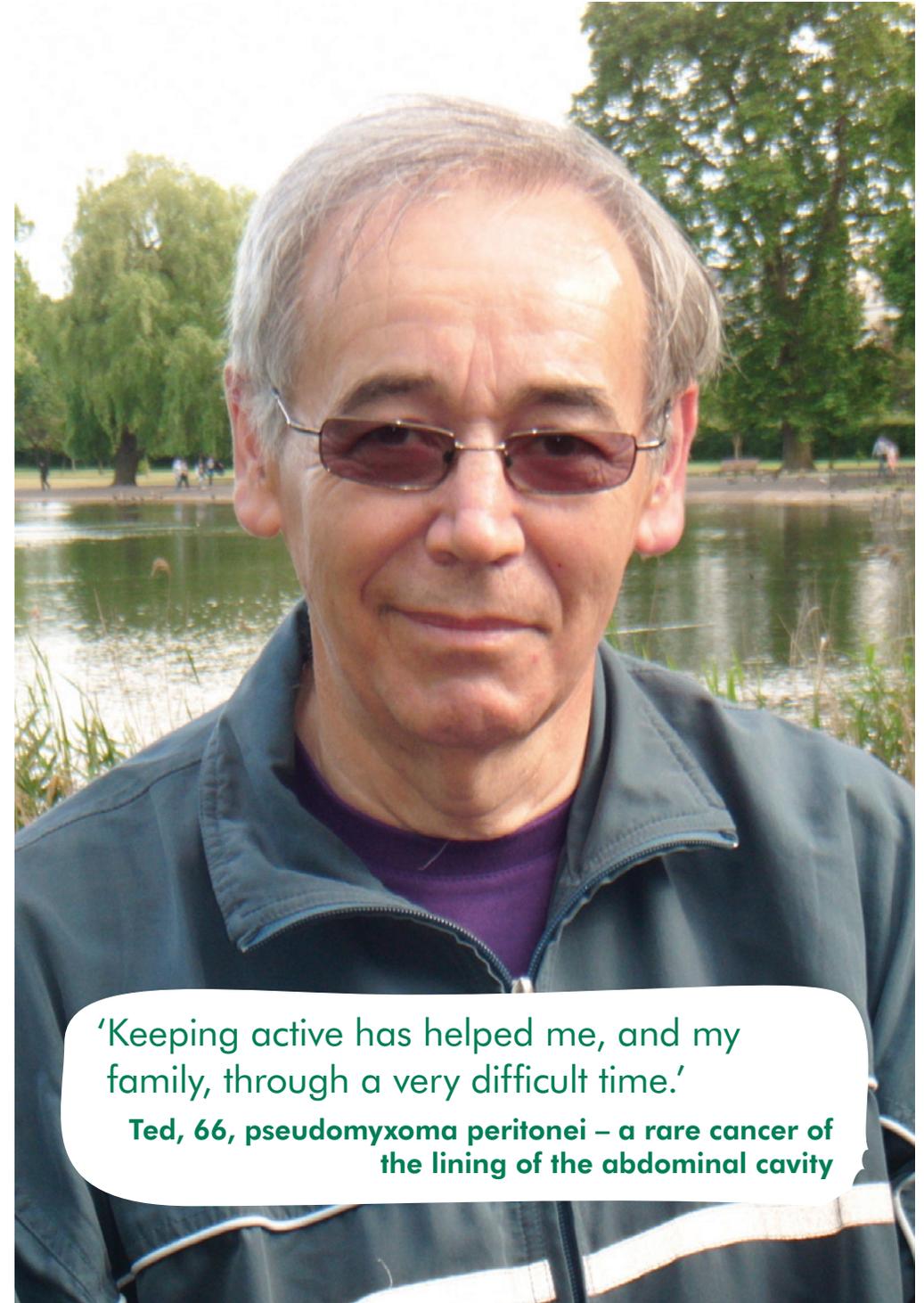
TED'S STORY

'I was diagnosed with cancer in October 2009 and had surgery the following month. In the run up to my surgery I was advised to keep as physically active as possible – the fitter you are the better you're going to be able to tolerate the surgery.'

To be honest, I didn't particularly enjoy the daily routine of brisk walking but I knew it was essential. It also felt like I was doing something for myself and gave me a sense of control after the diagnosis turned my life upside down.

Following extensive surgery, I was in hospital for nearly six weeks. The cancer and the long period of bed rest left me feeling rather frail and unsteady on my feet. It was difficult to get myself out and about but I knew it was an important part of my recovery. So I slowly increased the daily walking and built up my muscles through strength training.

Keeping active has helped me, and my family, through a very difficult time. It's helped me return to a more normal way of life and has given me a real sense of achievement. My confidence has returned, I am now back at work and I've even fulfilled one of my life long dreams – I bought a sailing boat. Now that's going to keep me active.'



'Keeping active has helped me, and my family, through a very difficult time.'

Ted, 66, pseudomyxoma peritonei – a rare cancer of the lining of the abdominal cavity

Over to you...

Once you've started, you'll probably find that being active becomes an enjoyable part of the way you live.

Most people begin to notice the benefits quickly. You'll feel less tired, less stressed and you'll look better and have more confidence. Making these changes and knowing the benefits to your health can keep you going, even on days when it's hard to feel motivated. If you're struggling, don't be hard on yourself. Just remind yourself of all the benefits and get started again. **Good luck!**

Don't forget, if you have questions, need support or just want to chat you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00 (Monday – Friday, 9am – 8pm).

Top 10 tips to get active and stay active

Getting active may be a big lifestyle change for you. But setting clear goals, recording your progress and having support can all help. Becoming active for the first time or returning to activity during or after a condition like cancer may not be easy, so here are our top 10 tips on how to get started and keep going:

- 1.** Keep in mind the benefits of becoming more active, and what you hope to achieve.
- 2.** Set goals you can achieve at your own pace. Whether that's being more active around the house, going for a walk or participating in a class, make sure it's the right goal for you.
- 3.** Gradually build up how much you do.
- 4.** Keep a record of how active you've been and how you feel after being active so you can see your progress. Try using the activity diary included in this pack to help.
- 5.** Share your plans with other people who are supportive.
- 6.** Try being active with other people, such as family or friends, or join a group or a club.
- 7.** Make sure the activities you do are fun and enjoyable.
- 8.** Don't be disheartened if you don't achieve a planned goal. Think about what went wrong, and set a new goal.
- 9.** As you find you can do more, try a new activity. Some people find trying a variety of activities helps.
- 10.** Remember you can ask for advice from your cancer specialist or GP if you have any questions about becoming more active. They may refer you to an exercise specialist or physiotherapist.

**Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face.
But you and your loved ones 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 fundraisers who make it all possible.

Together, we are Macmillan Cancer Support.

Questions about living with cancer?

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00 (Mon–Fri 9am–8pm)

Alternatively, visit [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)

Hard of hearing? Use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.

Non-English speaker? Interpreters available

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