

High temperature or fever

There are different reasons why a person with cancer may have a high temperature or fever.

It could be a symptom of an infection. Cancer and its treatment can weaken your immune system. This can increase your risk of getting an infection. Getting an infection when your immune system is weakened can be a serious complication of treatment.

Always contact the hospital on the 24-hour contact numbers you have been given and speak to a nurse or doctor if:

- your temperature goes over 37.5°C (99.5°F)
- you suddenly feel unwell, even with a normal temperature
- you have any symptoms of an infection, such as a cold, sore throat, cough, peeing frequently (urine infection), diarrhoea, or feeling shivery and shaking.

A high temperature or fever can also be:

- a symptom of some types of cancer, such as lymphoma and mesothelioma
- a symptom of an allergic reaction to a cancer drug.

Tips for avoiding infection

Before you start treatment, follow these tips:

- Talk to your doctor or nurse about a flu vaccine.
- Have a dental check.
- Buy a thermometer, so you can check your temperature.

During treatment, follow these tips:

- Take extra care to keep your mouth clean. Your nurse will show you how to do this.
- Have good personal hygiene. Wash your hands regularly, especially after using the toilet or when preparing meals. Have a daily shower or bath, and do not share towels.
- Avoid people who are unwell, for example people with chicken pox, shingles, diarrhoea or a fever.
- Stay away from crowded places where there are likely to be people with infections. This means avoiding rush hour and crowded shopping centres.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Cook food properly and store it at the correct temperature. Keep raw and cooked foods apart.
- Take care when looking after animals. Try to avoid handling any animal waste.
- Avoid swimming and public jacuzzis. Do social or sports activities at quieter times when there is less risk of picking up an infection in the changing room.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resource:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK Sepsis Trust 	www.sepsistrust.org

Further information

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/other-side-effects/avoiding-infection

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

- **Cancer treatment and sepsis**
- **Managing the symptoms of cancer**
- **Understanding chemotherapy**

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**, Monday to Friday, 9am 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 Life 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.

Revised in June 2018. Next planned review in 2021.