

Feel more like you



About this booklet

This booklet explains how certain cancer treatments can cause changes to your appearance. It is for people who have had changes to their skin, nails and hair because of cancer treatment.

It gives advice on how to manage these changes to help you feel more like you again. We hope it helps you deal with some of the questions or feelings you may have.

How to use this booklet

This booklet is split into sections to help you find what you need. You do not have to read it from start to finish. You can use the contents list on page 3 to help you.

It is fine to skip parts of the booklet. You can always come back to them when you feel ready.

On pages 66 to 72, there are details of other organisations that can help.

Quotes

In this booklet, we have included quotes from people who have had changes to their appearance because of cancer treatment, which you may find helpful. The quotes are from people who have chosen to share their story with us. To share your experience, visit [macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory)

We have also included quotes from No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors.

No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors

As well as reading this booklet, you can speak to a No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor. These are advisors who are based in some Boots stores. They are trained by Macmillan Cancer Support. They can give face-to-face advice to help people cope with visible side effects of cancer and treatment.

They can help with sparse brows and lashes, brittle nails, dry skin and covering up scars, as well as helping people to improve their confidence and self-esteem. Their role is about helping people look and feel like themselves again. Visit [boots.com/storelocator](https://www.boots.com/storelocator) to find your nearest No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor.

For more information

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](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)

If you would prefer to speak to us in another language, interpreters are available. Please tell us, in English, the language you want to use.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call us using Relay UK on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the Relay UK app.

We have some information in different languages and formats, including audio, interactive PDFs, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these, visit [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call **0808 808 00 00**.

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Changes caused by cancer treatments

This section explains how some cancer treatments may affect your skin, nails and hair. Their condition and appearance may change, depending on the drug or treatment you are having.

Your cancer doctor will talk to you about the treatment you need and the possible side effects before you agree (consent) to have treatment.

Your cancer team may give you advice on caring for your skin. They may tell you if there are products you should use or avoid. It is very important to follow their advice and to let them know about any changes to your skin, nails or hair.

We have more information about the side effects of different drugs and treatments at [macmillan.org.uk/treatment-and-drugs](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/treatment-and-drugs)

Cancer drug treatments

Cancer drugs are treatments for cancer that get into the bloodstream. They are also known as systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT). These treatments include:

- chemotherapy – [macmillan.org.uk/chemotherapy](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/chemotherapy)
- targeted therapy – [macmillan.org.uk/targeted-therapies](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/targeted-therapies)
- immunotherapy – [macmillan.org.uk/immunotherapy](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/immunotherapy)
- hormonal therapy – [macmillan.org.uk/hormonal-therapies](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/hormonal-therapies)

They can be given in different ways depending on the drug, the type of cancer and your treatment plan. Some people have a combination of different types of SACT.

Chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy drugs can cause many different side effects, including skin, nail and hair changes.

Hormonal therapy drugs used to treat cancers such as breast cancer and prostate cancer can also affect your skin, nails and hair. But their effects are usually milder.

The side effects will vary depending on the drugs you have.

The following are some of the most common skin, hair and nail changes caused by cancer drug treatments.

Skin

Cancer drug treatments can affect your skin. Your skin may become dry and more sensitive.

Some cancer drug treatments can also:

- cause a rash, which may be itchy
- make you more sensitive to the sun
- make your skin lighter or darker in some areas
- make any area treated with radiotherapy discoloured or sore.

Some cancer treatments lower your immune system. This means you are at more risk of getting an infection. You may be advised to avoid wet shaving. Using an electric razor is less likely to cut your skin.

Some people have medicines called steroids as part of their treatment or to reduce side effects. Steroids may make your skin more likely to:

- get spots
- change colour in some areas
- become thinner
- bruise.

Always tell your cancer team about any skin changes. They can give you advice, or prescribe creams or medicines to help.

We have more information about possible skin changes caused by cancer drug treatments. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/skin-nails](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/skin-nails)

Hair

Cancer treatments can affect the hair on your head and body in different ways.

Hair loss

Some cancer treatments, such as hormonal therapy, immunotherapy or targeted therapy drugs, may cause hair thinning. Chemotherapy is the most common cause of complete hair loss on the head.

Depending on the drug, some people also lose hair from other parts of the body. This can include:

- eyebrows
- eyelashes
- facial hair
- body hair, such as chest, underarm or pubic hair.

Ask your cancer doctor, specialist nurse or pharmacist if the drugs you are having cause hair loss and whether this is likely to include body hair.

If you want to cover up hair loss, there are different ways you can do this (pages 34 to 39).

Hair loss is almost always temporary. Your cancer team can give you information about coping with hair loss. Our booklet **Coping with hair loss** may be helpful (page 60). Or visit [macmillan.org.uk/hairloss](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/hairloss)

Very rarely, hair may not grow back. Or it may grow back thinner than before. If you are worried about this, talk to your cancer team.

Changes to hair texture or colour

Some cancer treatments, such as hormonal therapy drugs, immunotherapy or targeted therapy drugs may make hair thinner, curlier, drier or more brittle than usual. If you have facial hair, and are taking hormonal therapies, you may find that it grows more slowly than before.

Some drugs may cause hair to change colour. But this usually returns to normal when treatment ends.

Some treatments, such as targeted therapy drugs, may cause eyebrows or eyelashes to grow longer, curlier or thicker.

If you are having problems with hair changes, ask your cancer team for advice. Do not try to cut your eyelashes yourself. Your cancer team can arrange for an eye doctor to do this.

Any hair changes usually go back to normal after treatment ends. Your cancer team will give you advice on how to manage these changes.

Nails

Some cancer drug treatments can affect your nails. They may grow more slowly or break more easily. You might notice ridges, or white or dark lines across your nails. These changes usually disappear as the nails grow out after treatment. Sometimes nails can become loose or fall out.

If the skin around your nails becomes sore and swollen, contact the hospital straight away on the 24-hour number. These might be signs of an infection.

Tell your cancer team about any changes to your nails. They can give you advice or arrange for you to go to a foot care specialist (podiatrist).

Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy can also cause changes to the skin and hair in the area being treated.

Skin

Radiotherapy can cause changes to your skin but only in the area being treated. Your skin may become sore or itchy. If you have white skin, it may become red. If you have black or brown skin, it may become darker.

The radiographers or nurses will tell you how to care for your skin. It is important to only use products they recommend in the area being treated.

If you have radiotherapy to an area where you normally shave, ask the radiographers or nurses for advice. If you are having radiotherapy to your armpit, they may advise you on using deodorant. They may suggest using unperfumed and alcohol-free deodorants if the skin in your armpit becomes sensitive.

When you finish radiotherapy, you should protect the skin in the treated area from strong sunlight for at least a year. Once any skin reaction has disappeared, use a suncream with a high sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 50.

Hair

Radiotherapy to the head may cause hair loss. The hair that grows back may be thinner, patchy or a different colour. For some people, hair loss may be permanent. Your cancer team can usually tell you whether this is likely. If you are having radiotherapy to the chest or the area between the hips (pelvis), you are likely to lose hair in that area.



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Dry skin

If you have dry skin, these tips may help:

- Wash with lukewarm water using mild, unperfumed, soap-free cleansers. Soap will make your skin drier.
- Use unperfumed bath and shower products. If your skin feels sensitive, avoid products that contain colouring.
- Avoid having long, hot showers or baths, which will make your skin drier. Pat your skin dry instead of rubbing it. Use a clean, soft towel.
- Moisturise your skin regularly. This will keep it supple and less likely to become dry and itchy. Apply unperfumed lotions, creams or ointments soon after you have washed.
- Keep your nails short and filed to protect your skin from scratches.
- If you have dry or sore lips, use a lip balm. Choose one made from moisturising ingredients such as shea butter, glycerine or coconut oil. Use a lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 50.

Try these tips for cleansing your face:

- Use a gentle cleanser that does not remove the moisture from your skin. Creamy cleansers could be a good option. Put the cleanser on carefully and avoid your eyes.
- Remove cleansers with a damp cotton wool pad or a clean, damp flannel. This will leave your skin feeling soft and clean.
- If you use a cleanser, toner or face wash, avoid products containing perfume or 'parfum' in the ingredients. This means the product contains alcohol, which will make your skin dry.

Using moisturiser

If you have dry skin, use a moisturiser at least twice a day on your face and body. You may need a richer moisturiser than you usually use. Do not use products containing sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS), especially if you have eczema. This can irritate the skin.

Moisturisers containing oatmeal can be soothing for dry or sore skin. Try tying a muslin bag filled with oatmeal over your bath tap and letting the water run through. This can be a good way to soothe and soften your skin in the bath.

If your skin is very dry, it can become itchy. Try using an emollient or moisturising cream that contains oatmeal, menthol or 10% urea. This may help relieve the itchiness. Ask your specialist nurse or cancer team for advice. They may prescribe you something to reduce itching.

If you are having radiotherapy or targeted therapies, the staff at the hospital will talk to you about caring for your skin. Check with them before using any skin products.



Oily skin

If your skin is oily, try the following tips:

- Use a good cleanser and a light, oil-free moisturiser to keep your skin in good condition.
- Use a cleanser that you can wash off. Gently work the cleanser into your skin, then wash it off.
- Use a soft flannel or muslin cloth to remove all of the cleanser and help your skin feel cleaner.
- Do not overwork your skin. Avoid exfoliating or harsh products that take moisture out of the skin and leave it feeling tight.

If you are having chemotherapy, your skin may become less oily during treatment.

You could ask a No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor in your local store about ways to care for your skin (page 2).

Rashes or spots

If you develop a rash, always get it checked by your cancer doctor or specialist nurse straight away. They will know the cause and be able to give you advice.

Some targeted therapies can cause a rash or spots that look like acne. But these are not caused by acne. Your specialist nurse or cancer doctor can give you treatment that will help. Do not use anti-acne products that have not been prescribed by your cancer doctor. You should also avoid skincare products containing alcohol because this may make the rash worse.

Your specialist may prescribe creams or drugs to help if you develop itchy skin or a rash.

We have more information about targeted therapies on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/targeted-therapies](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/targeted-therapies)

Shaving

Some cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy drugs, can lower your immune system. This means you are at more risk of getting an infection. You may be advised to avoid wet shaving. Using an electric razor is less likely to cut your skin. We have more information and tips to avoid infection while having cancer treatment. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/infection](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/infection)



Taking care in the sun

Certain drugs and treatments can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Here are some tips to protect your skin if you are out in the sun:

- Wear loose clothes made of cotton or natural fibres to cover up.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and neck.
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day. This is usually between 11am and 3pm.
- Use a suncream with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 50. Choose one that protects the skin against ultraviolet A radiation (UVA) and ultraviolet B radiation (UVB). Suncreams with a 5-star rating, usually displayed on the front of the bottle, are best to use.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun.

Remember, the best way to protect your skin is to cover up and to stay out of strong sunlight, even in the winter months.

“ My skin reacted to the treatment and needed extra care. I had been sensitive to the sun before, now I was hyper-sensitive. After treatment, my body didn't immediately go back to normal. That's what is good about Macmillan – they are there for the long haul, offering support even after treatment has officially finished. ”

Julie, diagnosed with breast cancer

Changes in your skin tone

As your treatment goes on, you may notice changes in your skin tone or in the brightness of your complexion.

Using foundation

The following tips may help:

- If you wear foundation, you may need to change from your usual shade.
- If your skin appears duller or drier than usual, choosing a foundation with a dewy finish (moist looking) will brighten your complexion naturally.
- When finding the right shade of foundation, choose a base colour that is not visible at your jawline.
- Tinted moisturiser can work well if you are not used to wearing a lot of make-up, or if you prefer not to. Even a sheer or light foundation will help to even out your skin tone.

Applying a bronzer

If you are feeling paler than usual, or feel that your complexion lacks your usual warmth, bronzer is a great way of adding this back in:

- Using a powder brush, apply bronzer lightly to your forehead, cheekbones and down the middle of your nose. This adds a natural wash of colour to the face.
- Start by adding a small amount and gently build this up in thin layers until the desired colour is achieved. Blend in circular motions until there are no obvious lines.

You could ask a No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor in your local store about other make-up options to improve your skin tone (page 2).

Using a concealer

You can use a concealer under and over foundation, or on its own. It can hide dark circles under your eyes or other blemishes, such as marks or dark spots. It is helpful if you need a quick cover-up.

Using cosmetics with more pigment can help reduce the appearance of dark spots, particularly for black or brown skin tones.

**“ I attended the
Look Good Feel
Better workshop.
It was brilliant as I got
so many tips from
professional make-up
artists showing us how
to put on make-up and
draw on eyebrows.
We were given a
fantastic make-up
bag and content
to take home. ”**

Karen, diagnosed with lymphoma

If you have flushed or red skin

A green-tinted primer can help tone down rosy skin and even out the colour on your cheeks, nose and chin. But try to use these products sparingly. When you put on the primer, pat it gently on to your skin. Rubbing your skin can make the redness worse.

If you have flushed skin, try a medium to full coverage foundation with sun protection. Make sure the foundation matches the areas of your face that are less red. Pat the foundation over the primer to avoid disturbing it.

You could ask a No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor in your local store about using foundation or concealer, or toning down flushed skin (page 2).

Look Good Feel Better (LGFB) runs free workshops for people coping with cancer treatment (page 66). It has trained volunteer beauty professionals who offer practical advice and support. Workshops are available in over 80 hospitals and specialist cancer centres across the UK.

Ask your cancer doctor or specialist nurse for a referral, or visit **lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk** to find a workshop in your area.

Keeping clean

Some cancer drugs, especially chemotherapy, can raise your risk of getting an infection. Keep your make-up routine as clean as possible with the following tips:

- Wash your hands before applying creams or make-up.
- Do not share towels or flannels with other people.
- Check expiry dates on make-up.
- Do not share make-up brushes, sponges or any other applicators with anyone else.
- If you use mascara, avoid pumping the wand into the tube. This reduces the risk of introducing bacteria.
- Take eye make-up off using a new cotton pad for each eye to avoid spreading any possible infection.
- Clean your make-up brushes or sponges at least once a week, or use disposable sponges.
- Put the tops or lids back on any tubes or jars when you have finished using them.
- Look for the 'period after opening' symbol on your cream-based products. For example, there may be a small symbol of a container with 24m written inside it. That means once opened, this product is good for 24 months. After that, you should throw it away.

We have more information and tips to avoid infection while having cancer treatment. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/infection](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/infection)

Chemicals in cosmetics or toiletries

It can be worrying to read reports that suggest chemicals in cosmetics or toiletries may contribute to cancer risk. But there is no good scientific evidence to show this is true.

Parabens are chemicals commonly used as preservatives in cosmetic products. Phthalates are synthetic chemicals used to soften plastic. These chemicals are sometimes linked with cancer risk. This is because they have been found in body tissues, such as breast tissue. This has caused concerns that they may affect hormones in the body, particularly oestrogen.

But these chemicals are much weaker than natural oestrogen. Any effects are likely to be much smaller than the natural oestrogen in our bodies.

The UK and EU have safety regulations on the use of chemicals in cosmetics and toiletries. Manufacturers have to make sure their products are safe for use.

There is a lot of choice available in cosmetics and toiletries. So if you are concerned, you can choose products that do not contain these chemicals.

You can find more information about cosmetics, toiletries and cancer risk from Cancer Research UK (page 67).



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Caring for your nails

There are different ways to help care for your fingernails and toenails:

- Wear protective gloves when doing household tasks or gardening. This protects your nails and skin from detergents, chemicals and injury. It also protects your hands from too much exposure to water, which may cause fungal infections of the nail bed.
- Keep your hands and nails clean to help prevent infection, but avoid using very hot water.
- Wear comfortable shoes and cotton socks. Avoid anything that is tight-fitting or rubs against your toes.
- Clip your fingernails and toenails to keep them short. This makes nail changes less noticeable. Do not use scissors.
- Moisturise regularly using a hand, foot and nail cream. Try using a nail-strengthening cream.
- Massage a cuticle cream into your cuticles to help prevent dryness, splitting and hangnails. Do not cut your cuticles.
- Use an emery board to keep your nails short and smooth, and to avoid snagging.
- When filing your nails, only move the emery board in 1 direction across the nail. This stops your nails splitting further. Do not move the board backwards and forwards.

During some types of cancer treatment, it is best to avoid going for manicures or pedicures. This is to avoid the risk of infection as some cancer treatments can weaken your immune system.

Disguising nail changes

Wearing nail varnish is a good way to disguise nail changes. But if your nails are split, sore or damaged, do not use nail varnish or false nails. Here are some tips for wearing nail polish:

- Try water-based polishes, which contain fewer harsh chemicals.
- Use dark nail polishes to help disguise discoloured nails.
- When taking off the polish, avoid using nail polish remover containing acetone.
- Talk to your cancer team about having false nails, gels or other acrylics during treatment, because they may increase the risk of infection.

Tell your cancer doctor or specialist nurse if you notice changes to your nails. They can give you advice or arrange for you to go to a foot care specialist (podiatrist) for advice if needed.

“ I got on the train feeling much more glamorous, a little bit more positive and a little bit more confident. ”

Gill, diagnosed with breast cancer



Managing changes to your hair

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Coping with hair loss

Some cancer treatments cause changes to the texture and condition of your hair. It may become drier or more brittle.

Some treatments may also cause hair thinning or complete hair loss from the face, scalp and body. Chemotherapy is the most common cause of complete hair loss. But hair usually grows back after treatment ends.

Other cancer drugs, such as targeted therapy, immunotherapy or hormonal therapy drugs, may cause hair thinning. But they do not usually cause complete hair loss. Hair thinning can be upsetting, especially as you may need to take the drugs for some time.

If you have radiotherapy, you usually lose the hair in the treatment area but not anywhere else. Hair loss after radiotherapy is sometimes permanent.

With some chemotherapy drugs, it may be possible to prevent or reduce hair loss from the head by using a cold cap. This is called scalp cooling. It works by reducing blood flow so that less of the drug reaches the scalp. Scalp cooling is only effective when used with certain chemotherapy drugs. Your cancer doctor or chemotherapy nurse can tell you whether it is suitable for you.

If you have Afro hair (type 4 coily hair), it helps to remove any weaves or braids before trying scalp cooling. This is because they put extra strain on the hair follicles. You also need to avoid relaxing your hair chemically. If you plan to chemically relax your hair, it is important that your hair and scalp are in good condition. Your chemotherapy nurse will have information and instructions about your particular hair type.

We have more information on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/scalp-cooling](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/scalp-cooling)

Before chemotherapy, you might choose to cut your hair shorter rather than wait for it to fall out. The weight of long hair can pull on the scalp and make your hair fall out faster. Cutting it shorter may also help to give you a sense of control over your appearance. If you want to remove all your hair, use clippers. Shaving with a blade or razor can lead to skin cuts and infections.

If you are thinking about wearing a wig, ask your nurse about this as soon as you can. This means there is time to match the wig as closely as possible to your own hair. You will also be prepared if you lose your hair more quickly than expected.

NHS wigs are free if you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/hairloss](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/hairloss) or speak to your specialist nurse to find out more. In England, you may be entitled to a free wig on the NHS if you:

- are having or have had cancer treatment
- meet certain criteria.

“ My cancer nurse recommended a local wig company. My hairdresser had kept a sample of my hair before she shaved it, for a colour match for the wig. After trying lots, I left the shop with a wonderful wig. It is beautiful and it has brought my confidence back. ”

Karen, diagnosed with lymphoma

If you do not wear a wig, remember to protect your head from the sun, cold or wind. There are different types of headwear available.

If you want to cover up hair loss, other options include:

- hats
- scarves
- turbans.

It is important to do whatever makes you feel most comfortable.

Wearing hats, scarves or turbans can also add colour and style to your appearance.

“ I did not want people seeing me with my turban off. But after a while, I felt okay to try different headgear on, and we all had a laugh. ”

Karen, diagnosed with lymphoma

Moustache or beard

Facial hair can be an important part of your identity, culture or religion. Losing a moustache or a beard can be very difficult to deal with. Some online companies, make-up shops or theatrical shops sell moustaches or beards. Some of these can be tailored specially, but this can be very expensive.

Pubic hair

Some people lose their pubic hair. It is usually only temporary. Losing pubic hair can be upsetting. You may worry about how you look. If you have a partner, you may be concerned about what they think and how losing your hair might affect your sex life. Try to talk with your partner about how you feel. Being open with each other can help you find ways to manage your concerns.

Nasal hair

If you lose the hair from inside your nose, you may be more likely to have a runny nose. Although this can be irritating, it is only temporary and will stop when the hair grows back. Try to take plenty of tissues with you when you go out.

We have more information about coping with changes to your appearance in our booklet **Body image and cancer** (page 60) and on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/body-image](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/body-image)

Caring for your hair and scalp

These tips can help you care for dry, brittle or thinning hair:

- Only use gentle hair products and non-medicated shampoo.
- Only apply conditioner to the middle lengths of hair in small sections. Only use conditioner if your hair is long enough to do this.
- Use a wide-toothed comb when your hair is wet and more likely to get damaged. Start combing the ends of your hair first to reduce tangles. Combs cause less damage than brushes.
- Use brushes that have wide-spaced prongs rather than using full-bristled brushes.
- Avoid using hairdryers, straighteners and curling tongs.

It is also important to care for your scalp, no matter what skin colour you have. Keeping your scalp healthy can help to promote new hair growth and improve the way it feels. These tips can help:

- Follow your cancer team's advice on caring for your hair and scalp.
- Use a gentle shampoo or a facial wash to wash your hair and scalp. Washing is especially important if you wear a wig, which can cause your scalp to sweat.
- Apply a light moisturiser, such as a perfume-free face cream or oil designed for sensitive skin.
- Use suncream with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 50 on your scalp whenever you go out. Sun lotions designed for the face can feel more comfortable on your scalp. If you are having radiotherapy, you should not apply suncream to the area being treated. You can wear a hat or scalp to protect your scalp.
- Keep your head covered in cold weather.
- Use pillowcases made from natural fibres, such as cotton or linen. This can help to prevent irritation.

We have more information about looking after your hair during and after cancer treatment in our booklet **Coping with hair loss** (page 60).



Managing changes to your eyebrows and eyelashes

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Changes to your eyebrows and eyelashes

Some cancer drugs may cause your eyebrows and eyelashes to become thinner or to fall out completely. Your cancer team can tell you whether this is likely. It depends on the drugs and the dose you have.

Losing your eyebrows and eyelashes can change your appearance. This can be upsetting, but they usually grow back.

Your eyelashes and eyebrows may fall out later than the hair on your head. Sometimes this happens gradually during treatment, or after treatment has ended.

There are things you can do to help disguise these changes. No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors at your local store can help you with the techniques described here (page 2). You can also watch an advice video about these techniques at boots.com/macmillan

“ I was most worried about losing my eyebrows and my eyelashes. That is something that you can't hide, and I didn't want to look like a cancer patient. I didn't want people to treat me differently, or feel sorry for me. ”

Ayesha, diagnosed with Burkitt lymphoma



Your eyebrows

You can draw in the appearance of eyebrow hairs using a thin eyebrow pencil. Match the colour as close to your natural hair as possible. Choose a 'micro-brow pencil' because this can be used to create small strokes that look like hairs. If you are using a traditional eyebrow pencil, make sure it is freshly sharpened to achieve the same result.

You may want to add softer definition back into your brow area. Use an angled brow brush to apply a small amount of matte eyeshadow or eyebrow powder in a shade close to your natural colour.

Brow transfers work in the same way as temporary tattoos. They will give you a long-wearing transfer of realistic-looking eyebrows. Cut out and position each brow separately, then press on with a damp cloth.

It can be scary to redraw your eyebrows at first. But No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors at your local store can show you how. You can book an in-store appointment with a No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor (page 2).

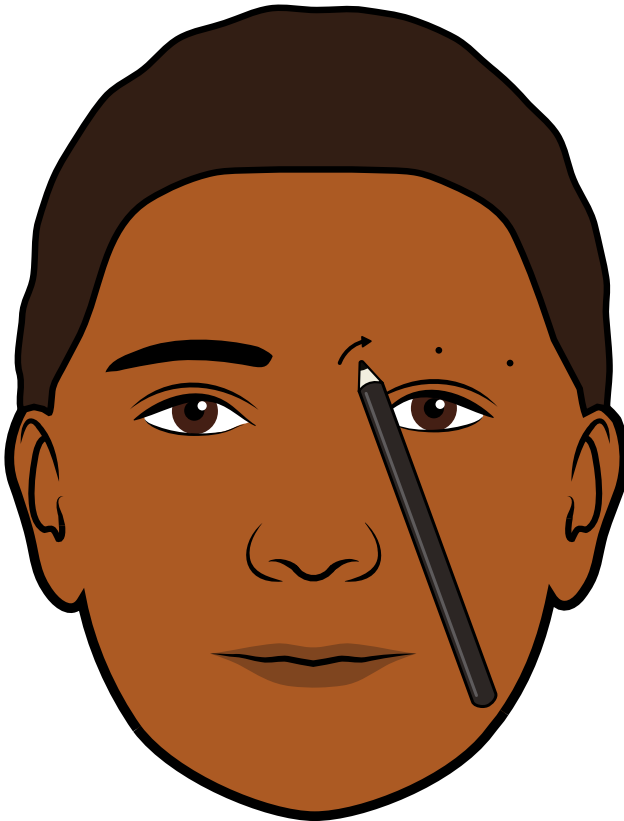
Creating natural-looking eyebrows

If possible, practise drawing on your eyebrows before your treatment begins. This way, you can get used to following the shape and arch of your brow.

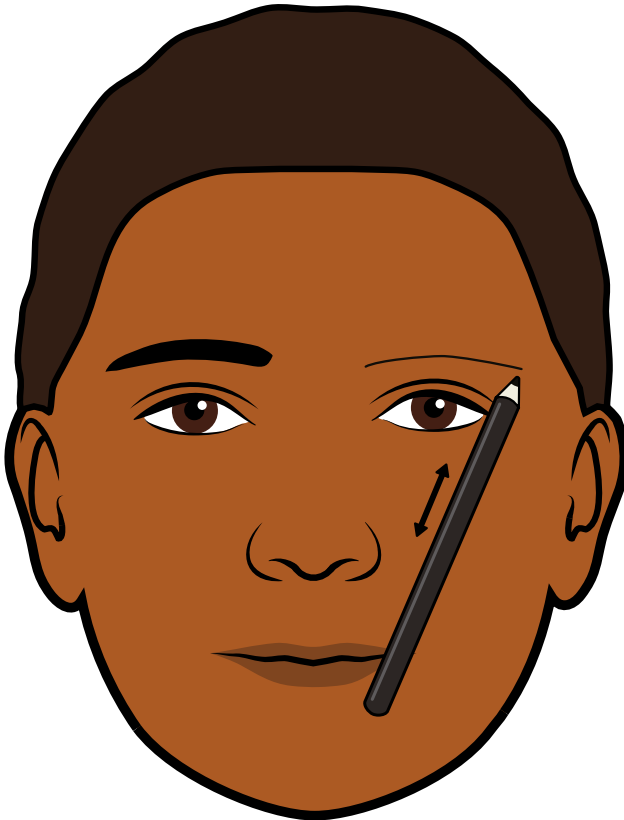
You could take a close-up photo of yourself before treatment. This will help you remember the position of your eyebrows and what they looked like.

The following tips may help to create natural-looking eyebrows:

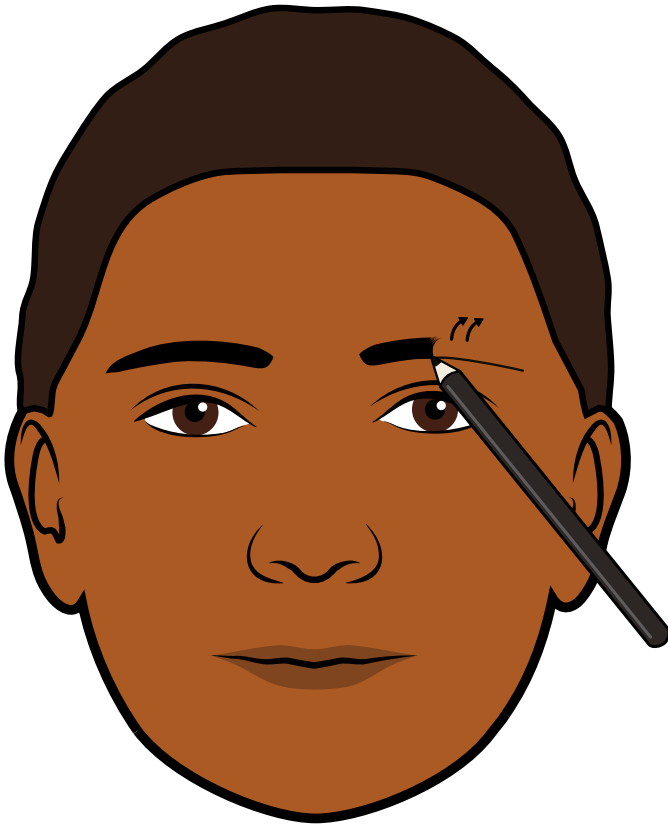
- Try drawing a dot of colour above the inner and outer corners of each eye, and a dot where you think you will create an arch. You can make a mark on the eyebrow and use this as a guide. This way, you can check for symmetry before you start drawing. If you place an eyebrow pencil alongside your nose, and angle it from the tip of your nose through the middle of the iris of the eye, until it meets the brow, this will be the highest point of the arch. The iris is the coloured circle around the pupil.



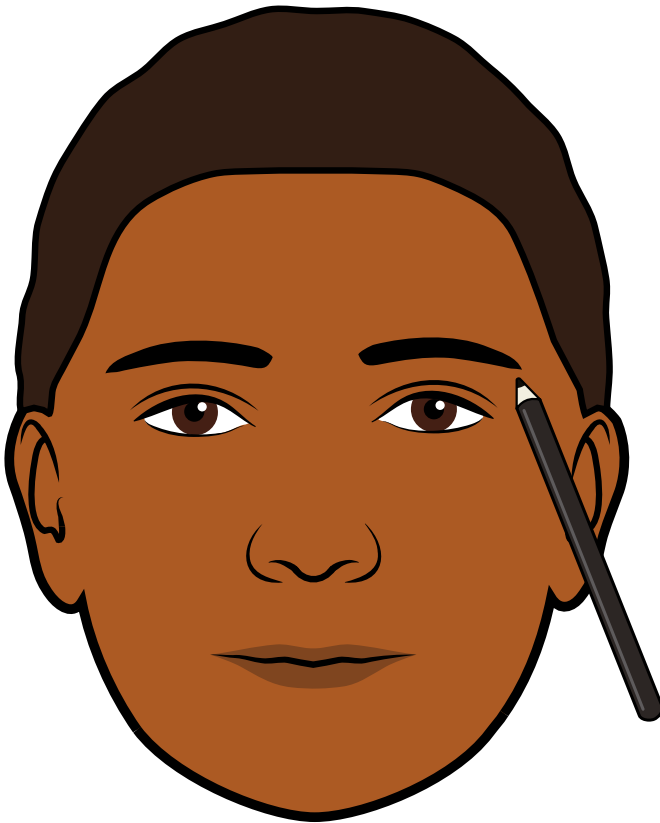
- Use your brow bone and your eyes to identify where your brows should be. Place the eyebrow pencil alongside your nose and above the inner corner of your eye at a 45-degree angle. This shows where a natural brow would start.
- The end of the brow should finish in line with the end of your eye. You can check this by placing the pencil alongside your nose, and angling it out towards the outer corner of your eye. The end of your brow should meet this point.



- Use a shade of pencil that matches your normal hair colour. Draw from the centre of the brow line outward, using light, feathery strokes. Plenty of tiny strokes with the pencil will look more realistic than a single line.



- Create a brow that is thicker-looking at the inner end (nearest to the nose) and thinner at the outer edge. Light pressure is all that you need. Comb through the colour with an eyebrow wand to give it a more natural appearance.
- Check for symmetry when you move on to your other eye. Try your best to make them look like each other. But remember that no 2 eyebrows are identical.



We have a video on our website that may be helpful.
Visit [macmillan.org.uk/brows-lashes](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/brows-lashes)

Permanent or temporary tattooing (microblading)

Some people choose to have permanent or temporary tattooing (microblading) to create new eyebrows.

This should not be done during treatment.

You should speak to your cancer doctor before having this done to make sure it is safe for you.

Long and thick eyebrows

Some targeted therapy drugs may make your eyebrows grow long and thick. If this happens, you can carefully trim them.

Your eyelashes

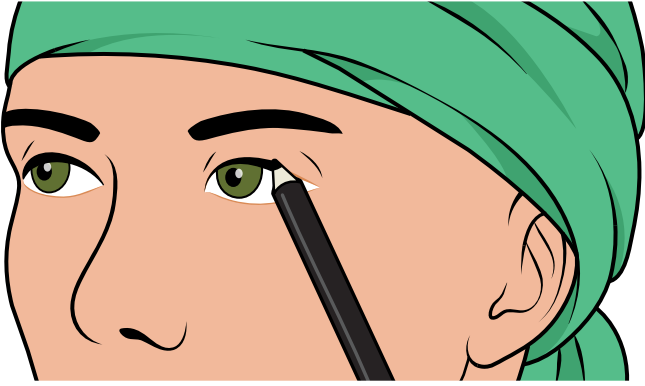
There are different make-up tips you can try if your eyelashes become thinner or fall out completely. No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors at your local store (page 2) can help you to practise these techniques.

Use a soft eyeliner and smudger to define your eyes and create the illusion of eyelashes. You can use a dark eyeshadow instead of eyeliner to create a softer line.

Here are some tips:

- Lift the skin just below your eyebrow to gently lift the lid area when applying the make-up. This will tighten your skin and make the pencil easier to apply.
- Use soft strokes along the eyelash line by using a smudger to soften the line and push colour further into the lashes.





- Apply the make-up lightly to make natural-looking eyelashes.
- Use a gentle, teasing action when applying mascara. A wand with short bristles may be easier to use on short and sparse eyelashes.
- If you want to wear false eyelashes, check with your specialist nurse or healthcare team first. Some false eyelashes may use glue that can irritate sensitive skin. There are other false eyelashes available that do not use glue. Your No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor can tell you more about these products (page 2).

Caring for your eyelashes

The following tips may help when caring for your eyelashes:

- Do not use eyelash curlers. They can damage fragile eyelashes.
- Try not to rub your eyes, to help prevent losing eyelashes.
- When you are removing eye make-up, soak a cotton pad in eye make-up remover. Hold the cotton pad to your eye. Keep it there for a couple of seconds before gently wiping away. This stops you pulling too much on your eyelashes.
- Avoid waterproof mascara. It can be harder to remove. If your eyes are sensitive, try using mascara that dissolves in warm water.

A No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor can advise you on which mascara would be best (page 2).

Long or ingrowing eyelashes

Some targeted therapy drugs can cause your eyelashes to grow very long or grow inwards. This can irritate your eyes. Do not try to cut your eyelashes yourself. Your cancer team can arrange for an eye doctor to do this.



Your feelings

Getting emotional support

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“The No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor was really helpful – very kind, compassionate and supportive. ”

Gill, diagnosed with breast cancer

Getting emotional support

There are many ways to get support to help you manage changes to your appearance and find ways to cope.

We hope our tips and suggestions help you find what works best for you.

Talking to people you trust about how you are feeling can be a positive step. If others know how you feel, it is easier for them to support you.

Sharing experiences with people in the same situation can also help. You can visit the Macmillan Online Community at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community) Or ask your specialist nurse or cancer team to put you in touch with a local support group (page 65).

Our booklet **Body image and cancer** (page 60) has practical advice on:

- coping with different feelings
- managing other people's reactions
- how to improve your body image
- where to get help and support.

You can also speak to our cancer support specialists about any emotional or practical issue. Call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**.



Further information

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About our information

We provide expert, up-to-date information about cancer. And all our information is free for everyone.

Our information has the PIF Tick quality mark for trusted health information. This means our information has been through a professional and strong production process.

Order what you need

You may want to order more booklets or leaflets like this one. Visit **orders.macmillan.org.uk** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

We have booklets about different cancer types, treatments and side effects. We also have information about work, financial issues, diet, life after cancer treatment and information for carers, family and friends.

Online information

All our information is also available online at **macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support** You can also find videos featuring stories from people affected by cancer, and information from health and social care professionals.

Other formats

We also provide information in different languages and formats, including:

- audiobooks
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- easy read booklets
- interactive PDFs
- large print
- translations.

Find out more at **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats**

If you would like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at **informationproductionteam@macmillan.org.uk** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

The language we use

We want everyone affected by cancer to feel our information is written for them.

We want our information to be as clear as possible. To do this, we try to:

- use plain English
- explain medical words
- use short sentences
- use illustrations to explain text
- structure the information clearly
- make sure important points are clear.

We use gender-inclusive language and talk to our readers as 'you' so that everyone feels included. Where clinically necessary we use the terms 'men' and 'women' or 'male' and 'female'. For example, we do so when talking about parts of the body or mentioning statistics or research about who is affected.

To find out more about how we produce our information, visit **macmillan.org.uk/ourinfo**



Other ways we can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we are here to support you.

Talk to us

If you or someone you know is affected by cancer, talking about how you feel and sharing your concerns can really help.

Macmillan Support Line

Our support line is made up of specialist teams who can help you with:

- emotional and practical support if you or someone you know has been diagnosed with cancer
- clinical information from our nurse specialists about things like diagnosis and treatments
- welfare rights advice, for information about benefits and general money worries.

To contact any of our teams, call the Macmillan Support Line for free on **0808 808 00 00**. Or visit **[macmillan.org.uk/support-line](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/support-line)** to chat online and see the options and opening times.

Our trained cancer information advisers can listen and signpost you to further support.

Our cancer information nurse specialists can talk you through information about your diagnosis and treatment. They can help you understand what to expect from your diagnosis and provide information to help you manage symptoms and side effects.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call us using Relay UK on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the Relay UK app.

You can also email us, or use the Macmillan Chat Service via our website. You can use the chat service to ask our advisers about anything that is worrying you. Tell them what you would like to talk about so they can direct your chat to the right person. Click on the 'Chat to us' button, which appears on pages across the website. Or go to **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**

If you would like to talk to someone in a language other than English, we also offer an interpreter service for our Macmillan Support Line. Call **0808 808 00 00** and say, in English, the language you want to use. Or send us a web chat message saying you would like an interpreter. Let us know the language you need and we'll arrange for an interpreter to contact you.

Macmillan Information and Support Centres

Our Information and Support Centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. Visit one to get the information you need and speak with someone face to face. If you would like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone confidentially.

Find your nearest centre at **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Help with money worries

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you have been affected in this way, we can help. Please note the opening times may vary by service.

Financial advice

Our expert money advisers on the Macmillan Support Line can help you deal with money worries and recommend other useful organisations that can help.

Help accessing benefits

You can speak to our money advisers for more information. Call us free on **0808 808 00 00**. Visit **[macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport)** for more information about benefits.

Help with work and cancer

Whether you are an employee, a carer, an employer or are self-employed, we can provide information to help you manage cancer at work. Visit **[macmillan.org.uk/work](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/work)**

Talk to others

No one knows more about the impact cancer can have on your life than those who have been through it themselves. That is why we help bring people together in their communities and online.

Support groups

Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, family member or friend, we can help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face to face with people who understand. Find out about support groups in your area by calling us or by visiting **macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport**

Online Community

Thousands of people use our Online Community to make friends, blog about their experiences and join groups to meet other people going through the same things. You can access it any time of day or night. Share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts at **macmillan.org.uk/community**

You can also use our Ask an Expert service on the Online Community. You can ask a money adviser, cancer information nurse or an information and support adviser any questions you have.

Macmillan healthcare professionals

Our nurses, doctors and other health and social care professionals give expert care and support to individuals and their families. Call us or ask your GP, consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals near you.

Other useful organisations

There are lots of other organisations that can give you information or support. Details correct at time of printing.

Body image and cancer support organisations

No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors

www.boots.com/storelocator

No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors are trained to give free, face-to-face advice to help you cope with the visible side effects of cancer treatment.

Changing Faces

Helpline **0300 012 0275**

www.changingfaces.org.uk

Offers support and information for adults and children with a visible difference: a mark, scar or condition that makes them look different. Can arrange consultations with skin camouflage specialists who can teach people to self-apply specialist cover creams.

Look Good Feel Better

Tel **0137 274 7500**

www.lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk

Offers free skincare and make-up workshops across the UK to help people manage the visible side effects of treatment, and boost their confidence and well-being.

General cancer support organisations

Cancer Black Care

Tel **0734 047 1970**

www.cancerblackcare.org.uk

Provides support for all those living with and affected by cancer, with an emphasis on Black people and people of colour.

Cancer Focus Northern Ireland

Helpline **0800 783 3339**

www.cancerfocusni.org

Offers a variety of services to people affected by cancer in Northern Ireland.

Cancer Research UK

Helpline **0808 800 4040**

www.cancerresearchuk.org

A UK-wide organisation that has patient information on all types of cancer. Also has a clinical trials database.

Macmillan Cancer Voices

www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices

A UK-wide network that enables people who have or have had cancer, and those close to them such as family and carers, to speak out about their experience of cancer.

Maggie's

Tel **0300 123 1801**

www.maggies.org

Has a network of centres in many locations throughout the UK. Provides free information about cancer and financial benefits. Also offers emotional and social support to people with cancer, their family and friends.

Penny Brohn UK

Helpline **0303 300 0118**

www.pennybrohn.org.uk

Offers physical, emotional and spiritual support across the UK, using complementary therapies and self-help techniques.

Teenage Cancer Trust

Tel **0207 612 0370**

www.teenagecancertrust.org

A charity devoted to improving the lives of teenagers and young adults with cancer. Runs a support network for young people with cancer, their families and friends.

Tenovus

Helpline **0808 808 1010**

www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk

Aims to help everyone in the UK get equal access to cancer treatment and support. Funds research and provides support such as mobile cancer support units, a free helpline, benefits advice and an online 'Ask the nurse' service.

General health information

Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

Provides information about health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

NHS.UK

www.nhs.uk

The UK's biggest health information website.
Has service information for England.

NHS 111 Wales

111.wales.nhs.uk

NHS health information site for Wales.

NHS Inform

Helpline **0800 22 44 88**

www.nhsinform.scot

NHS health information site for Scotland.

Emotional and mental health support

Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Provides help, information and support for people with anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression.

Mind

Helpline **0300 123 3393**

www.mind.org.uk

Provides information, advice and support to anyone with a mental health problem through its helpline and website.

Samaritans

Helpline **116 123**

Email **jo@samaritans.org**

www.samaritans.org

Provides confidential and non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Counselling

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

Tel **0145 588 3300**

www.bacp.co.uk

Promotes awareness of counselling and signposts people to appropriate services across the UK. You can also search for a qualified counsellor on their 'Therapist directory' page.

UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

Tel **0207 014 9955**

www.psychotherapy.org.uk

Holds the national register of psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors, listing practitioners who meet exacting standards and training requirements.

Support for older people

Age UK

Helpline **0800 678 1602**

www.ageuk.org.uk

Provides information and advice for older people across the UK via the website and advice line. Also publishes impartial and informative fact sheets and advice guides.

LGBT-specific support

LGBT Foundation

Tel **0345 330 3030**

lgbt.foundation

Provides a range of services to the LGBT community, including a helpline, email advice and counselling. The website has information on various topics including sexual health, relationships, mental health, community groups and events.

OUTpatients

www.outpatients.org.uk

A safe space for anybody who identifies as part of the queer spectrum and has had an experience with any kind of cancer at any stage. Also produces resources about LGBT cancer experiences. OUTpatients runs a peer support group with Maggie's Barts.

Support for carers

Carers Trust

Tel **0300 772 9600**

www.carers.org

Provides support, information, advice and services for people caring at home for a family member or friend. You can find details for UK offices and search for local support on the website.

Carers UK

Helpline **0808 808 7777**

www.carersuk.org

Offers information and support to carers across the UK. Has an online forum and can put people in contact with local support groups for carers.

Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up to date but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it. Some photos are of models.

Thanks

This booklet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by members of Macmillan's Centre of Clinical Expertise.

With thanks to:

Jacob Ereth-Purves, No.7 Global Talent & Development Specialist; Dr Helena Lewis-Smith, Associate Professor of Psychology at The Centre for Appearance Research; Dr Kathleen McHugh, Consultant Clinical and Health Psychologist; Emily Simms, No7 Global Education Specialist & Makeup Artist; and Dr Deborah Wright, Pharmacist.

Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories.

We welcome feedback on our information. If you have any, please contact **informationproductionteam@macmillan.org.uk**

Sources

Below is a sample of the sources used in our information about how certain cancer treatments can cause changes to your appearance. If you would like more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **informationproductionteam@macmillan.org.uk**

Asfour L, Montgomery K, Solomon E, Harries M. PS08: The psychological impact of hair loss and the role of psychological interventions. *British Journal of Dermatology*. 2021; 185(S1): 172–173. Available from: www.doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20356 [accessed September 2023].

Brook I. Early side effects of radiation treatment for head and neck cancer. *Cancer/Radiothérapie*. 2021; 25(5): 507–513. Available from: www.doi.org/10.1016/j.canrad.2021.02.001 [accessed October 2023].

Karatas F, Sahin S, Sever AR, Altundag K. Management of hair loss associated with endocrine therapy in patients with breast cancer: an overview. *SpringerPlus*. 2016; 5: 585. Available from: www.doi.org/10.1186/s40064-016-2216-3 [accessed October 2023].

Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It is just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer.

They are produced by our cancer information specialists who, along with our nurses, money advisers, campaigners and volunteers, are part of the Macmillan team. When people are facing the toughest fight of their lives, we are here to support them every step of the way.

We want to make sure no one has to go through cancer alone, so we need more people to help us. When the time is right for you, here are some ways in which you can become a part of our team.

5 ways you can help someone with cancer

1. Share your cancer experience

Support people living with cancer by telling your story, online, in the media or face to face.

2. Campaign for change

We need your help to make sure everyone gets the right support. Take an action, big or small, for better cancer care.

3. Help someone in your community

A lift to an appointment. Help with the shopping. Or just a cup of tea and a chat. Could you lend a hand?

4. Raise money

Whatever you like doing you can raise money to help. Take part in one of our events or create your own.

5. Give money

Big or small, every penny helps. To make a one-off donation see over.

Please fill in your personal details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other

Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Please accept my gift of £
(Please delete as appropriate)

I enclose a cheque / postal order /
Charity Voucher made payable to
Macmillan Cancer Support

OR debit my:

Visa / MasterCard / CAF Charity
Card / Switch / Maestro

Card number

Valid from

Expiry date

Issue no

Security number

Signature

Date / /

Do not let the taxman keep your money

Do you pay tax? If so, your gift will be worth 25% more to us – at no extra cost to you. All you have to do is tick the box below, and the tax office will give 25p for every pound you give.

I am a UK tax payer and I would like Macmillan Cancer Support to treat all donations I make or have made to Macmillan Cancer Support in the last 4 years as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise.

I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand Macmillan Cancer Support will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Macmillan Cancer Support and our trading companies would like to hold your details in order to contact you about our fundraising, campaigning and services for people affected by cancer. If you would prefer us not to use your details in this way please tick this box.

In order to carry out our work we may need to pass your details to agents or partners who act on our behalf.

If you would rather donate online go to macmillan.org.uk/donate



Please cut out this form and return it in an envelope (no stamp required) to: Supporter Donations, Freepost RUCY-XGCA-XTHU, Macmillan Cancer Support, PO Box 791, York House, York YO1 0NJ

This booklet explains how certain cancer treatments can cause changes to your appearance. It is for people who have had changes to their skin, nails and hair because of cancer treatment.

This booklet gives advice on how to manage these changes to help you feel more like you again. We hope it helps you deal with some of the questions or feelings you may have.

At Macmillan we know cancer can disrupt your whole life. We'll do whatever it takes to help everyone living with cancer in the UK get the support they need right now, and transform cancer care for the future.

For information, support or just someone to talk to, call **0808 808 00 00** or visit **macmillan.org.uk**

Would you prefer to speak to us in another language? Interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use. Are you deaf or hard of hearing? Call us using Relay UK on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the Relay UK app.

Need information in different languages or formats?

We produce information in audio, interactive PDFs, easy read, Braille, large print and translations.

To order these, visit **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats** or call our support line.

Trusted
Information
Creator



Patient Information Forum