

Eating problems and cancer



About this booklet

This booklet is about some common eating problems that can happen with cancer or cancer treatments. Many people have eating problems during and after cancer treatment.

The booklet explains why eating problems might happen and suggests practical tips that might help. It also has information about looking after your mouth. There is also information for carers, family members and friends.

We have other booklets and audiobooks about diet and cancer:

- **Healthy eating and cancer**
- **The building-up diet.**

You can order these booklets for free on our website.

Visit **orders.macmillan.org.uk**

We also have information on our website about managing weight changes. Visit **macmillan.org.uk/changes-in-weight**

Check with your healthcare team that this is the right booklet for you, and whether you need more information.

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 54 to 60, there are details of other organisations that can help.

If you find this booklet helpful, you could pass it on to your family and friends. They may also want information to help them support you.

Quotes

In this booklet, we have included quotes from people who have had eating problems. These are from people who have chosen to share their story with us. To share your experience, visit **macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory**

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**

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, easy read, Braille, large print, interactive PDF and translations. To order these, visit **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats** or call **0808 808 00 00**.

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How cancer can affect eating

How cancer affects eating can vary. Some eating problems may be due to the cancer. Others may be side effects of cancer treatment (pages 6 to 9).

Some people feel well and can eat normally. For others, the cancer may have caused symptoms which led to their diagnosis. Depending on where the cancer is in your body, symptoms can include:

- weight loss
- a poor appetite – pages 34 to 35
- feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting) – pages 30 to 31
- pain
- taste changes – pages 18 to 19
- problems swallowing – pages 20 to 21
- diarrhoea or constipation – pages 25 to 28.

The cancer may also change the way your body uses the food you eat. This means that you do not get all the nutrients you need.

If you have eating problems, your doctor or nurse may suggest you visit a dietitian.

Dietitians

Dietitians are qualified health professionals. They are experts in assessing people's food needs. They can advise you about foods to eat or avoid, to help with any eating problems. They can also advise you about any food supplements that might be helpful.

You can ask your doctor or nurse at the hospital to refer you to a dietitian. In some hospitals, you can refer yourself. Contact the hospital's dietetic department for more information. If you are not in hospital, your GP or district nurse can advise you whether:

- you can refer yourself to a dietitian
- they need to refer you.

A community dietitian may be able to visit you at home.

Cancer treatments

Some cancer treatments can cause eating problems. Often, these are temporary and get better when you finish treatment. But for some people, cancer or cancer treatments can permanently affect their diet and eating. Your doctor, specialist nurse or dietitian will support you and advise you on what might help.

Surgery

If you have had any type of surgery, you may not feel like eating. You may need to make changes to your diet and eating pattern if you have had surgery to your:

- mouth
- throat
- gullet (oesophagus)
- stomach
- bowel.

After some types of surgery, you may be able to eat only soft foods. Some types of surgery can also slow down your digestion. If you are not sure what to eat, speak to your cancer doctor, GP, specialist nurse or dietitian. They will be able to help you.

Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy to your head, neck or chest area can cause:

- taste changes
- difficulty swallowing
- a dry mouth
- a sore mouth and throat
- blisters in your mouth
- thick saliva.

Radiotherapy to the tummy (abdomen) can make you feel sick or be sick.

Radiotherapy to the pelvic area (between the hips) can cause changes in your bowel habits such as wind or diarrhoea.

We have information on radiotherapy in our booklet **Understanding radiotherapy** (page 48). We also have information on our website.

Visit [macmillan.org.uk/radiotherapy](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/radiotherapy)

“ I had a face mask made for the radiographers to treat my neck and throat. I had daily radiotherapy for 7 weeks – I found it increasingly difficult to eat. Not eating was a real issue for me. I found this exceptionally hard. ”

Claire, diagnosed with throat and neck cancer

Chemotherapy

Common side effects of some chemotherapy treatments include:

- loss of appetite
- feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- constipation
- diarrhoea
- a sore mouth
- taste changes.

We have more information in our booklet **Understanding chemotherapy** that you may find useful (page 48).

We also have information at [macmillan.org.uk/chemotherapy](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/chemotherapy)

“ Since starting chemotherapy, I have experienced a severe loss of the ability to taste. Most foods, especially savoury, are quite bland, but sweet foods are generally not so bad. ”

Trevor, diagnosed with kidney cancer

Targeted therapy

Targeted therapy can affect your appetite. Other side effects include:

- taste changes
- a dry or sore mouth
- feeling sick (nausea)
- diarrhoea.

We have more information about targeted therapy on our website. Visit **macmillan.org.uk/targeted-therapy**

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy can cause side effects such as diarrhoea, feeling sick (nausea) or a reduced appetite.

We have more information about immunotherapy on our website. Visit **macmillan.org.uk/immunotherapy**

Risk of infection (reduced immunity)

Some types of cancer may increase your risk of getting an infection. Some cancer treatments can temporarily reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood. These cells fight infection. If the number of white blood cells is low, you are more likely to get an infection. A low white blood cell count is called neutropenia.

It is important to follow good food hygiene advice to reduce your risk of getting an infection. Your hospital team will talk to you about this. They will advise you about any changes you need to make.

Most people will not need to change their diet to help reduce the risk of infection. But if you are having high-dose chemotherapy, you may be advised to avoid foods that might contain harmful bacteria. This is sometimes called a clean or neutropenic diet.

Food safety advice

Chemotherapy can affect your immunity, so it is important to avoid foods that may increase your risk of an infection.

It is best to avoid:

- foods or drinks made from unpasteurised milk, including some cheeses
- raw or undercooked meats, poultry, fish and shellfish.

It is important to rinse all fruit, vegetables and salad with water before eating them.

Special diets

Some people with cancer may have specific eating problems and need to follow a special diet. This includes people who have:

- diabetes
- a stoma (colostomy or ileostomy)
- had all or part of their stomach or bowel removed
- had radiotherapy to their mouth or jaw
- a risk of bowel obstruction.

Your cancer doctor, GP, specialist nurse or dietitian can give you advice.

We also have more information about diabetes in our booklet **Diabetes and cancer treatment** (page 48).



Mouth and throat problems

Some cancer treatments can damage the cells lining your mouth or throat. Your mouth may become very sore. Some people develop mouth ulcers. Soreness and ulceration of the lining of the mouth or throat is called mucositis. It can be very painful, but your healthcare team can prescribe painkillers and other medicines to help.

Mucositis can be caused by:

- chemotherapy (page 8)
- targeted therapy (page 9)
- immunotherapy (page 9)
- radiotherapy to the head and neck (page 7)
- infection.

Any damage is usually temporary, and most side effects get better when treatment ends. But sometimes side effects can be permanent.

Some people develop a fungal mouth infection called thrush (candidiasis). It can make eating unpleasant and change how things taste. Thrush can coat your tongue, the inside of your cheeks and the back of your throat. It looks red with white patches. Your doctor can prescribe an anti-fungal medicine to help.

Different members of your healthcare team can advise you on how to take care of your mouth during treatment. These include your:

- cancer doctor (oncologist)
- clinical nurse specialist (CNS) – a nurse who gives information about cancer, and support during treatment
- dietitian – someone who gives information and advice about food and food supplements
- speech and language therapist (SLT) – someone who gives information and support to people who have problems talking and swallowing
- therapy radiographer – someone who treats certain types of cancer with radiotherapy.
- dentist or dental hygienist.

They may look at your mouth to check for any problems. Tell them if your mouth becomes sore or if the soreness gets worse. They can give you something to help.

Caring for your mouth

Many hospitals have their own mouth care guidelines for people having cancer drug treatments or radiotherapy. It is important to follow the advice of your healthcare team.

Looking after your teeth

Your cancer doctor or specialist nurse will be able to advise you. They may recommend using a high-fluoride or non-foaming toothpaste to help reduce any soreness.

They may also advise you to go your dentist before you start treatment.

Use a soft toothbrush to clean your teeth gently. Do not rinse out toothpaste after you have cleaned your teeth. Just spit out any extra. This leaves a coating of fluoride on your teeth. Avoid using toothpicks. Check with your doctor or specialist nurse before using dental floss or interdental brushes. If you have a low blood platelet count, flossing may make your gums bleed.

If you wear dentures

If you wear dentures, it is important to look after them. You are usually advised to clean them regularly with soap and water or a denture cleaning paste. If you use a denture cleaning solution, be careful to follow instructions and do not soak dentures for longer than advised. At night, clean and dry them, then store in a covered container.

Unless you are having radiotherapy, leave dentures out of your mouth for as long as you can during the day. This is to prevent them rubbing against your gums.

If you are having radiotherapy to the jaw area, you may be advised to keep your dentures in as much as possible during the day. Doing this can help to maintain the shape of your gums. If your mouth is very sore, talk to your healthcare team as it may feel more comfortable to leave your dentures out.

Using a mouthwash

Mouthwashes can be very soothing, but many of the ones you can buy in a chemist or shop may be too strong. They may irritate your mouth if it is dry and painful.

If your mouth is sore, a saltwater mouthwash can help reduce soreness. To make the mouthwash, add 1 teaspoon of salt to 900ml of cold or warm water (just under 2 pints). Rinse this around your mouth and spit it out. Then rinse your mouth with cold or warm water.

If your mouth is very painful, tell someone in your healthcare team. They can prescribe an anaesthetic gel or mouthwash if needed.

If your tongue is 'coated'

This may make your food taste unpleasant and put you off eating. You can clean your tongue with a bicarbonate of soda solution. Dissolve 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in 570ml of warm water (1 pint). Dip a soft toothbrush or gauze in the solution and use it to clean your tongue. You can buy bicarbonate of soda in a chemist.

If this does not help, talk to your healthcare team. You may have oral thrush and need treatment.

If you are having radiotherapy for a head and neck cancer, talk to your healthcare team about how to look after your mouth and teeth. We have more information in our booklet **Understanding head and neck cancer** that you may find useful (page 48).

Tips if you have a sore mouth

The following tips may help if you have a sore mouth:

- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water. If fruit juices sting your mouth, try less acidic fruit juices, squashes or cordials. These include peach nectar or blackcurrant squash. You could freeze juice in an ice cube tray and suck on the cubes to soothe your mouth.
- Avoid fizzy drinks if they sting your mouth.
- Try milk or milk-based drinks, such as malted drinks, milkshakes and hot chocolate. These can be made using cow's milk, goat's milk or a plant-based alternative such as soya, rice or oat milk.
- Cold food and drinks may be soothing. Try ice cream, soft milk jellies or adding crushed ice to drinks.
- Very hot drinks can irritate your mouth, if it is sore. Some people find it better to have drinks that are lukewarm or at room temperature.
- Try drinking through a straw.
- Salty, spicy or acidic food may irritate your mouth, but some people may still enjoy these foods.
- Try to avoid rough textured food like toast or raw vegetables.
- Keep your food moist by adding sauces and gravies.
- You may find taking painkillers before meals will help. Ask your specialist nurse for advice about what to use. They may suggest using dispersible paracetamol that you can rinse around the inside of your mouth before swallowing.

Tips if you have a dry mouth

Radiotherapy to the head and neck area, and treatment with some cancer drugs, can damage the salivary glands. This may cause a dry mouth. The medical term for a dry mouth is xerostomia.

The following tips may help you cope with a dry mouth during and after cancer treatment:

- Take frequent sips of water or a sugar-free drink. Keep a glass of water by your bed and carry a drink with you when you go out.
- Try sucking ice cubes or lollies. You can make lollies by freezing fresh fruit juice or squash in ice cube trays or lolly containers with sticks.
- Add moisture to make food easier to swallow, especially dry and starchy foods like bread, biscuits, crackers and potatoes. For example, moisten foods with gravies, sauces, extra oil, salad dressings, yoghurt, mayonnaise or butter.
- Chew your food well and take sips of fluid between mouthfuls.
- Chew sugar-free gum. This can sometimes help you to produce more saliva.
- Tell your doctor. They can prescribe mouthwashes, lozenges, saliva substitute sprays, gels or tablets if needed.
- Use a lip balm to protect your lips. If you are having radiotherapy or oxygen therapy, you must not use a petroleum-based lip balm such as Vaseline®. Use a water-based lip balm instead. Your clinical nurse specialist or radiotherapy team can advise you about this.
- Try using an atomiser spray with cool water to keep your mouth moist. Take it with you when you go out.
- Try to avoid alcohol, especially spirits, as these can irritate your mouth. This includes mouthwashes that contain alcohol.
- Do not smoke, as this can irritate your mouth and make it feel dry.
- Try to limit caffeinated drinks, and acidic food and drinks such as citrus fruit.

Tips for coping with changes to taste

You may find that food tastes different or that you lose your sense of taste during treatment. This is usually temporary, but sometimes it can be permanent.

You may no longer enjoy certain foods, or you may find that all food tastes the same. Your food may taste very sweet or salty. Or you may have a metallic taste in your mouth or find that things taste 'like cardboard'.

“ I experienced taste changes quite early on during my chemo. There was a constant funny salty bland taste in my mouth. Food just didn’t taste good anymore. ”

Priti, diagnosed with ovarian cancer

The following tips may help:

- Try different foods to find out what tastes best to you. Eat foods that you enjoy.
- Keep trying different foods as your taste changes. Foods that you have not enjoyed may taste better after a few weeks.
- Use seasonings, spices and herbs such as pepper, cumin or rosemary to flavour your cooking. But if your mouth is sore, you may find that some spices and seasonings make it worse.
- You may find it better to eat bland foods such as bread, potatoes and crackers.
- Try marinating meat in fruit juice or a sauce before cooking it.
- Cold meats may taste better served with pickle or chutney.
- Sharp-tasting foods can be refreshing and leave a pleasant taste in your mouth. These include fresh fruit, fruit juices and sugar-free sour or boiled sweets. Be careful if your mouth is sore as these may be painful to eat.
- If you no longer like tea or coffee, try fruit or herbal teas, milk or a cold drink.
- Some people find that cold foods taste better than hot foods. You may find it helps to let your food cool before eating it.
- Serve food with sauces to add flavour. But be careful if your mouth is sore as some sauces, such as curry or sweet and sour, may feel painful to eat.
- If you notice a metallic taste in your mouth, try using cutlery made of plastic, wood or bamboo.
- Brushing your teeth before meals may be helpful.

Tips for coping with difficulties chewing or swallowing

Some cancer treatments can affect the cells in the lining of the throat. This includes some anti-cancer drugs and radiotherapy for head or neck cancer. This can make it painful to chew or swallow. An infection in your mouth or throat, such as thrush, can also make chewing and swallowing uncomfortable.

Tell your doctor or dietitian if you have any difficulties chewing or swallowing. If having a drink makes you cough, and you are feeling unwell, you should tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible. A speech and language therapist (SLT) can advise you about swallowing problems.

“ Meal times were a huge effort, I had to eat pureed food whilst everyone else tucked into steak and chips. ”

Rebecca, diagnosed with tongue cancer

Here are some tips to help with difficulties chewing or swallowing:

- Take painkillers 30 minutes before meals. This may make it easier to chew and swallow food. Your healthcare team can advise you about which painkillers to take. Tell your doctor or nurse if you find it difficult to swallow tablets. They will prescribe you liquid medications.
- Choose soft foods that are easy to swallow, such as scrambled eggs or tofu, custard, milk puddings or yoghurt.
- Soften foods with sauces and gravy.
- Chop meat and vegetables finely and cook them for a long time. For example, you could make a stew or casserole.
- Cut the crusts off bread to make softer sandwiches. Some people find thin bread easier to swallow. Your dietitian or SLT may advise you to stop eating bread, as it can be hard to digest and swallow. You may find crackers easier to swallow.
- If you have a blender or food processor, you could liquidise cooked foods.
- Consider ordering frozen meals for delivery. Some companies have a soft-food range.
- You may find it easier to replace some meals with a meal supplement drink. There are lots of different ones available. Your dietitian can provide nutritional advice and prescribe supplement drinks if needed. You can buy some at pharmacies or online, such as Complan®, Meritene® or Aymes Retail drinks. Always talk to your doctor or dietitian before taking supplement drinks. They can explain which might be best for you.

If you are too tired to cook or eat

Feeling very tired (fatigued) is a common side effect of cancer treatment. It can also be caused by the cancer itself. Cancer-related tiredness is different for everyone. It often gets better after treatment ends. But it may continue for months or sometimes years.

When you are very tired, you may struggle to cook your meals. You may even feel too tired to eat.

Tips to help you cope with tiredness

There are things you can do if you are feeling too tired to cook or eat:

- Use frozen meals, tinned foods and ready meals. Read and follow cooking instructions carefully. Cook all foods properly to avoid any risk of food poisoning.
- If your family or friends offer to help, ask them to do the shopping or cook for you.
- Rather than going shopping for food, arrange an online delivery. Many supermarkets offer this. Or use a local meal-delivery company.
- Ready meals can be expensive, but they can be a good option when you feel too tired to cook.
- If you have a freezer, prepare food when you are feeling less tired. Make more than you need and freeze portions to use when you are too tired to cook.
- It may be easier to eat smaller meals more often, rather than 3 bigger meals.

- If you find a main meal too much to prepare or eat, have a snack meal. For example, you could have baked beans, eggs or cheese on toast, or a bowl of soup with added cream or grated cheese. Or you could have a pudding such as apple crumble and custard or fruit and ice cream.
- If you really do not want to eat, try a nourishing drink. For example, you can make a smoothie with bananas, peaches, strawberries or other soft fruit (fresh or frozen). Add these to a blender or liquidiser with fortified milk, plant-based milk, fruit juice, ice cream or yoghurt. You can fortify milk by adding 2 to 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder to 570ml (1 pint) of full-fat milk and mixing it together. Keep it in the fridge.
- Ask your doctor, nurse or dietitian for advice. They may prescribe or recommend supplement drinks.
- If you feel you need more help at home with cooking, talk to your GP or a dietitian. They may be able to arrange for you to have meals delivered, or for someone to help you prepare your food.

We have more information in our booklet **Coping with fatigue (tiredness)** that you might find helpful.

You can order our booklets and leaflets for free.
Visit **orders.macmillan.org.uk** or call **0808 808 00 00**.





Bowel changes that affect your diet

Cancer or cancer treatments can cause changes to your bowel. This can include constipation, diarrhoea and wind.

Tips to help with constipation

Constipation means that you are not able to pass stools (poo) as often as you normally do. It can become difficult or painful for you to empty your bowels. Cancer treatments and medicines such as painkillers and some anti-sickness drugs can cause constipation.

Some people may need medicines called laxatives to treat constipation. Your doctor or nurse can give you advice about this.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if:

- you are having problems emptying your bowels (pooing)
- your stools are hard
- you are not emptying your bowels properly.

They can give you advice and may prescribe laxatives to help.

You may need specific advice if you:

- have bowel cancer
- have a stoma
- are at risk of bowel obstruction.

Here are some tips that can help with constipation:

- For some people, it may help to eat plenty of fibre each day. Good sources of fibre include whole-grain breakfast cereals (for example, Weetabix®, Shredded Wheat® or muesli), wholemeal bread, flour and pasta, brown rice and fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Drink plenty of fluids – this can be hot and cold drinks. Aim to drink at least 2 litres (3½ pints) a day. This is very important if you increase the amount of fibre in your diet. Eating fibre without drinking enough can make constipation worse.
- Natural remedies for constipation include prune juice, prunes, fig syrup and dried apricots.
- Gentle exercise, such as walking, will help keep your bowels moving.
- If you are constipated because of medicines you are taking, talk to your doctor or nurse. It may be possible to change the dose you take.

We have more information you may find helpful in our booklet **Healthy eating and cancer** (page 48).

Tips to help with diarrhoea

Diarrhoea means passing more stools (poo) than is usual for you, or having watery or loose stools. If you have a stoma, it may be more active than usual.

Chemotherapy, targeted therapy, immunotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery can all cause diarrhoea. Treatment can affect the healthy cells that line the digestive tract, which causes diarrhoea. Other causes of diarrhoea can include infection or other medications, such as antibiotics.

Diarrhoea can be a temporary, mild side effect. But for some people, it can be severe. If you have diarrhoea, tell your doctor or nurse. They can check the cause to find the best way to manage it. They may prescribe anti-diarrhoea medicines.

If your diarrhoea is caused by radiotherapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapy or immunotherapy, you must take the anti-diarrhoea medicines prescribed by your doctor. You need to do this even if you change your diet.

If you have diarrhoea after surgery to remove part of your bowel, talk to your doctor or specialist nurse before changing your diet.

Sometimes diarrhoea can be severe. Contact the hospital straight away if:

- you have diarrhoea at night
- you have diarrhoea 4 or more times in a day
- you have a moderate or severe increase in stoma activity
- the anti-diarrhoea drugs do not work within 24 hours.

Here are some tips that can help with diarrhoea:

- Drink at least 2 litres (3½ pints) of fluids each day. This will help replace the fluid lost from diarrhoea.
- Avoid drinking alcohol and coffee.
- Eat small, frequent meals made from light foods. This could be white fish, poultry, well-cooked eggs, white bread, pasta or rice.
- Eat your meals slowly.
- Eat less fibre, such as cereals, raw fruits and vegetables, until the diarrhoea improves.
- Avoid greasy, fatty foods such as chips and beef burgers, and spicy foods like chilli.

If you are taking antibiotics

Antibiotics can kill the healthy bacteria normally found in the bowel. Live yoghurt or yoghurt drinks contain bacteria that may replace the healthy bacteria. This may help ease diarrhoea caused by antibiotics.

Tips to help with wind

The amount of wind we produce varies with each person. Some foods are more likely to cause wind.

Pelvic radiotherapy (radiotherapy to the lower tummy area) and some types of bowel surgery can cause problems with wind. Constipation and some medicines can also cause wind.

If you find wind difficult to cope with, talk to your doctor or specialist nurse. If passing wind becomes painful, tell your doctor.

We have more information in our booklet **Understanding pelvic radiotherapy** you may find useful.

You can order our booklets and leaflets for free.

Visit **orders.macmillan.org.uk** or call **0808 808 00 00**.



Below are some tips that can help with wind:

- Eat and drink slowly. Take small mouthfuls and chew your food well.
- Avoid food that you think gives you wind. This might include beans, lentils and pulses, cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage and broccoli, pickles and fizzy drinks.
- Avoid sugar-free chewing gum.
- A popular natural remedy is peppermint water. Or you could try peppermint tea. You can also buy peppermint oil capsules, or ask your GP to prescribe these.
- You could try taking charcoal tablets. You can buy these from a health food shop or a pharmacy. Charcoal can affect other medicines you may be taking, so always ask your doctor or pharmacist first.
- Gentle exercise, especially walking, can help.
- Try to ensure you empty your bowels (poo) regularly. Wind can be a sign of constipation. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you think you are constipated (pages 25 to 26).

Feeling sick, heartburn and indigestion

Some cancer treatments can make you feel sick (nausea). This includes some chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy drugs. Radiotherapy to the brain, stomach, bowel or close to the liver can also make you feel sick. Some painkillers or antibiotics can cause nausea. You may also get nausea if you have constipation or liver damage.

Different anti-sickness drugs can help prevent and control nausea. Your cancer doctor, nurse or GP can prescribe these for you. Tell your healthcare team if the drugs are not helping. They can prescribe a different type.

Tips to cope with feeling sick (nausea)

If feeling sick is making you not want to eat, these tips may help:

- Try eating dry food, such as toast, crackers or a plain biscuit, before you get up in the morning.
- Prepare small meals and eat little and often.
- If the smell of cooking makes you feel sick, eat cold meals or food from the freezer that only needs heating up. Remember to follow the cooking instructions to make sure it is properly cooked.
- If possible, let someone else do the cooking.
- Avoid fried, fatty foods with a strong smell.
- Try eating in a room where there is plenty of fresh air.

- Sit in an upright position at a table when eating. Stay sitting for a short time after the meal.
- Food or drinks containing ginger or peppermint can help with nausea. You could try ginger or peppermint tea, crystallised ginger, or ginger biscuits.
- Sipping a fizzy drink may help. Try mineral water, ginger ale, lemonade or soda water.
- Try having drinks between meals rather than with your food.
- Some people find acupressure wristbands may help. But ask your doctor or nurse before using them. You can buy these from a pharmacy or online.
- Relaxation techniques such as meditation or breathing exercises may help relieve nausea.
- Try to empty your bowels (poo) regularly. Constipation can make you feel sick.

If you feel sick and do not want to eat, try to make sure you drink plenty of fluids. Nourishing drinks such as milky drinks can make sure you get nutrients such as protein. When you start eating again, start with light foods, such as thin soups. You can slowly build up to a more varied diet.

We have more detailed information about coping with nausea and vomiting on our website. Visit **[macmillan.org.uk/nausea-vomiting](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/nausea-vomiting)**

Tips for coping with heartburn and indigestion

Heartburn is a burning sensation in the chest behind the breastbone. It is caused by acid from the stomach irritating the lining of the gullet (oesophagus).

Indigestion is discomfort in the upper part of the tummy (abdomen). It often happens after eating. It may be caused by stomach acid irritating the lining of the stomach.

Some drugs can also irritate the stomach lining. These include:

- steroids
- anti-inflammatory painkillers
- some cancer treatments such as chemotherapy.

“ I still struggle with digestion and food and so I still can't eat certain things. ”

Krista, diagnosed with myeloma

You may also get indigestion if you do not eat or drink much, have a small stomach or do not move around very much. Smoking, alcohol, and some foods can also cause indigestion or make it worse.

Here are some tips to help relieve heartburn and indigestion:

- Try to avoid chocolate, alcohol, fatty and spicy foods, fizzy drinks, chewing gum, hard-boiled sweets and mint. These can all cause indigestion. Try to limit or avoid these and any other foods that cause you discomfort.
- Try to eat small meals often, instead of large meals.
- A glass of milk or a yoghurt may help relieve symptoms.
- After eating, do not do any vigorous activity for at least 45 to 60 minutes.
- Try not to lie flat on your back, especially after meals. If you are in bed, use extra pillows or raise the head of the bed by a few inches to help keep you more upright after meals.
- Wear loose clothing around your waist.
- If you get indigestion at night, avoid eating a meal or drinking tea or coffee for 3 to 4 hours before you go to bed.
- Try to keep to a healthy weight.
- There are medicines that can help. Talk to your GP or cancer doctor about what might be best for you.
- If you smoke, try to stop or cut down. The NHS has a lot of information and support to help you give up smoking (page 60). We also have more information on our website. Visit **[macmillan.org.uk/stop-smoking](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/stop-smoking)**

Changes to your appetite

You may lose your appetite during cancer treatment. This may be because:

- you feel sick (pages 30 to 31)
- you have a sore mouth (page 16)
- food and drink tastes different (pages 18 to 19)
- you are constipated or have diarrhoea (pages 25 to 28).

If side effects of treatment are stopping you eating your normal diet, talk to your doctor or nurse. They can try to find ways to help manage your side effects.

It is important that you eat enough to keep as well as possible. If you do not want to eat, ask your cancer doctor or nurse to refer you to a dietitian. If you are at home, your GP or district nurse may be able to refer you to a community dietitian.

A dietitian can look at what you are eating and help you get the nutrients you need. They can advise you on which foods are best for you, and whether any supplement drinks would be helpful.

Tips if you have a poor appetite

These tips might help:

- Have smaller meals more often. Use a smaller plate and make your food look attractive to eat.
- Eat at the times that work best for you, even if it is at different times to other people. Try to eat your meals in a room where you feel relaxed.
- Keep snacks handy between meals. These can include nuts, crisps, dried fruit or cheese and crackers. If you need something softer, try yoghurt, peanut butter or fromage frais.
- You may find it easier to eat cold foods that do not need cooking, or ready-made foods that can go straight into the oven.
- Some people find drinking a small amount of alcohol just before, or with, food helps stimulate their appetite. Check with your doctor that you can have alcohol.
- Have nourishing drinks as well as small meals. These might include milkshakes, yoghurt drinks or fruit juices. These can contain a lot of sugar which can damage your teeth. Rinse your mouth out with water after having sugary drinks and brush your teeth regularly (pages 14 to 15).
- If you have family or friends who would like to help, ask them to cook for you.
- Sometimes medicines can be used to help stimulate your appetite. These include a low dose of steroids or the hormone medroxyprogesterone. Your doctor may prescribe these for you.

Everyone's appetite changes and you may have good and bad days. Make the most of the good days by eating well and treating yourself to your favourite foods.

If you have recently had surgery, you may need advice about the best foods for you. Talk to a dietitian or your specialist nurse or doctor about this.

If your medicines make you very hungry

Some medicines, such as steroids, may increase your appetite. You might want to eat much more than usual. Try to eat healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables instead of sweets and crisps. This is so you do not gain too much weight. We have more information about healthy eating in our booklet **Healthy eating and cancer** (page 48).

“My treatments cause weight gain, I am the heaviest I have ever been despite exercise and healthy eating. I am trying to take back control of this by looking at my glucose and increasing protein and fibre.”

Charlotte, diagnosed with breast cancer

Your feelings about eating problems

You may feel worried about your eating problems and how they may affect your life at home. You may worry that changes in your eating will affect your relationships with your partner, family or friends. Or you may be anxious about what other people will think.

Many people find that it helps to talk to someone they trust. You might find it difficult to talk about your feelings with someone you know well. You could speak to your healthcare team at the hospital, or your GP instead. There are ways they can support you.

Getting help with meals

You may not always feel well enough to shop or cook food for yourself or others. This may be frustrating. If you usually prepare the meals for your family, it may feel hard to let someone else do this. Try not to feel guilty about letting someone else do the things you usually do. When you feel better, you can go back to your routine.

You may find it easier to use ready meals or pre-prepared meals on days when you do not feel like cooking. This is fine to do sometimes. You can always add some fresh vegetables, salad or fruit to the meal.

If you live on your own and need help with cooking or shopping, talk to your healthcare team at the hospital or your GP. They may be able to arrange for help at home, meals on wheels or an organisation to help with cooking or shopping.

Caring for someone with eating problems

If you are the main carer for someone with cancer, it can be difficult to know how to deal with eating problems, such as lack of appetite or weight loss. Mealtimes are usually an enjoyable and important part of life. It can be upsetting and worrying when you have prepared a meal and the person is not interested in food or cannot eat very much.

Cancer, cancer treatments and other medicines can all affect someone's appetite. The person you are caring for may feel sick or have diarrhoea or constipation (pages 25 to 28). This can stop them eating. They may:

- feel too tired to eat (pages 22 to 23)
- have a sore or dry throat or mouth (pages 16 to 17)
- find chewing and swallowing difficult (pages 20 to 21).

The amount someone can eat may change each day, and their likes and dislikes may also change. Try not to put pressure on someone to eat. This can be stressful for both of you. If you know when their appetite is at its best, you can make the most of it. For example, you could treat them to their favourite foods.

If the person you are caring for continues to struggle with food and is losing weight, speak to their doctor or nurse. They can refer them to a dietitian. The dietitian can advise them about what they eat. They may suggest using nutritional supplement drinks if needed.

Tips for carers making and serving food

The following advice may help you when shopping, cooking and serving food for someone with cancer.

Preparing food

- Ask the person what they would like to eat. If they do not know what they want, prepare a meal that they normally like and offer a small amount.
- Try to talk openly about their eating problems and what both of you think will help. This can help you both feel more in control.
- Give them smaller meals and snacks, whenever they feel like eating. If they never feel like eating, try to make sure they have regular small meals and snacks.
- Offer them their favourite foods at the times when you know their appetite is good.
- The person you are caring for may find cooking smells make them feel sick. Prepare food in a different room if possible and open the windows when cooking.
- Stock up on items you know they like. You can then prepare meals and snacks easily. Tinned foods and pre-prepared frozen meals can be as good as a meal that takes more time to prepare.
- If the person cannot manage solid foods, try soft foods. This might include porridge, bananas, soup, pho, mashed potato, mashed cassava or yam, roasted plantain, dahl, tofu, yoghurt, congee or milk-based foods like custard or rice pudding.
- Make batches of their favourite meals and freeze portions to use at another time.

- Moist food can be easier to eat and will help prevent a dry mouth. Try adding sauces or gravies.
- Add extra energy to everyday meals and drinks. For example, try adding fortified milk to tea or coffee. You can fortify milk by adding 2 to 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder to 570ml (1 pint) of full-fat milk and mixing it together. Keep it in the fridge. You can also add cream, butter or cheese to meals.
- If the person would like it, try offering a small amount of alcohol just before, or with, food. Some people find this helps their appetite. Check with the healthcare team that the person can have alcohol.

As well as preparing food yourself, you may find it helpful to use meal-delivery companies. If you have difficulty getting to the shops yourself, remember many supermarkets offer home-delivery services. You may need to book delivery slots ahead. Or you may have someone who can shop for you.

Take care when preparing food if the person you are caring for may be at risk of infections, including food poisoning. Their doctor or dietitian will be able to advise you about this. Always use food by the 'best before' and 'use by' dates. We have information about food hygiene and lowered immunity in our booklet **Healthy eating and cancer** (page 48).

If the person you are caring for has side effects from their treatment, talk to their healthcare team about what might help. Side effects can include:

- feeling sick (pages 30 to 31)
- being sick (pages 30 to 31)
- taste changes (pages 18 to 19)
- a sore mouth (page 16)
- changes to bowel habits (pages 25 to 29).

Serving food

- Serve food in a well-ventilated room with the window open.
- Try to create a comfortable eating environment. Make sure the person is in a comfortable position.
- Present meals so they look appetising.
- Keep servings small. Too much food can be overwhelming and off-putting. The person can always have more if they want to.
- If someone's sense of taste or smell has changed, it may help to serve food cold or at room temperature.
- If the person notices a metallic taste, use plastic, wooden or bamboo cutlery.
- Try not to worry if they cannot always eat what you have cooked. Gently encourage them to eat, but try not to push them too much.



Helpful resources about eating problems and cancer

We have listed some helpful resources about eating problems and cancer.

Eating – help yourself. A guide for patients and their carers

The Christie NHS Foundation Trust

This booklet has information about eating well if you have cancer and are concerned about losing your appetite and losing weight. It has tips on how to make food as nourishing as possible and ideas for snacks and drinks.

christie.nhs.uk/media/arehsi4e/218-eating-help-yourself.pdf

Eating well when you have cancer

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

This booklet has been written to help people eat well when they have cancer. It suggests foods to help increase energy intake. It also has recipes and sources of further information and support.

patientinfolibrary.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/PI-0036-08.pdf

Nutritional products. Availability of nutritional drinks, powders and puddings: A guide for patients and carers

The Christie NHS Foundation Trust

This booklet is for people who are finding it difficult to eat their usual foods. It describes nutritional supplements that are available and how they can be used.

christie.nhs.uk/media/g0tbz1jm/229-nutritional-products-availability-of-nutritional-drinks-powders-and-puddings-oct-24-final.pdf

Eat well during cancer

World Cancer Research Fund

This booklet explains how to cope with the common side effects of cancer treatment, and follow as healthy a diet and lifestyle as possible.

wcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Eat-well-during-cancer.pdf

We have more information on how to contact the World Cancer Research Fund on page 55.

Diet and cancer information

Royal Surrey Cancer Centre

This website explains how to eat well during cancer treatment, and manage symptoms and side effects of treatment with diet. It has a series of videos about dealing with different eating problems and whether to take nutritional supplements.

royalsurrey.nhs.uk/dietandcancer



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 specialist nurses 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** to chat online and find 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** 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**

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.

Nutrition and diet information and support

British Dietetic Association

Tel: **0121 200 8080**

www.bda.uk.com

Provides general information about food and health. Has information about accessing a dietitian, and a number of food factsheets about medical conditions and diet.

British Nutrition Foundation

Tel: **0207 557 7930**

www.nutrition.org.uk

Has information about different food types and healthy eating.

Diabetes UK

Helpline (England, Wales and Northern Ireland): **0345 123 2399**

Helpline (Scotland): **0141 212 8710**

www.diabetes.org.uk

Provides information and support to anyone affected by any type of diabetes. Has information about managing diabetes and also funds research.

World Cancer Research Fund

www.wcrf-uk.org

Tel: **0207 343 4205**

Provides information about how diet, weight and physical activity affect the risk of developing and surviving cancer.

General cancer support organisations

Black Women Rising

www.blackwomenrisinguk.org

Aims to educate, inspire and bring opportunities for women from the BAME community. Shares stories and supports Black cancer patients and survivors through treatment and remission.

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.

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.

General health information

Drinkaware

www.drinkaware.co.uk

Provides independent alcohol advice, information and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking. Also has a web chat, for anyone concerned about their own drinking, or someone else's.

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.

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 the 'How to find a therapist' 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.

Emotional and mental health support

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.

LGBT-specific support

LGBT Foundation

Tel **0345 330 3030**

www.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.

Stop smoking services

NHS Smokefree Helpline (England)

Tel **0300 123 1044**

www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking

Offers information, advice and support to people who want to stop smoking or have already stopped and do not want to start again.

Quit Your Way (Scotland)

Tel **0800 84 84 84**

www.nhsinform.scot/quit-your-way-scotland

Scotland's national stop smoking support service. Offers advice and information about how to stop smoking. You can also chat online to an adviser.

Help Me Quit (Wales)

Tel **0808 278 6119**

Text **'HMQ' to 80818**

www.helpmequit.wales

Offers information, advice and support on stopping smoking in English and Welsh.

Stop Smoking NI (Northern Ireland)

www.stopsmokingni.info

Has information and advice about stopping smoking. Also links to other support organisations for people in Northern Ireland who want to give up smoking.

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: Lindsey Allan, Macmillan Oncology Dietitian; Michelle Buono, Macmillan End of Life Education Nurse/Clinical Nurse Specialist; Gemma Hutton, Oncology Dietitian; Pauline McCulloch, Macmillan Colorectal Clinical Nurse Specialist; and Rachel White, Specialist Oncology Dietitian.

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 eating problems information. If you would like more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **informationproductionteam@macmillan.org.uk**

Acute Oncology Initial Management Guidelines. Version 4.0
UKONS. 2023. Available from www.ukons.org/site/assets/files/1067/ukons_ao_initial_management_guidelines_final_version_2023.pdf [accessed July 2023].

Lalla RV, Bowen J, et al. MASCC/ISOO clinical practice guidelines for the management of mucositis secondary to cancer therapy. *Cancer*. 2014; 120(10): 1453–1461. Available from doi: 10.1002/cncr.28592 [accessed July 2023].

Mouth Care Matters. A guide for hospital healthcare professionals, Second edition. Health Education England. 2019. Available from <http://mouthcarematters.hee.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/01/MCM-GUIDE-2019-Final.pdf> [accessed July 2023].

Oral Care guidance and support in cancer and palliative care. Third edition. UK Oral Management in Cancer Care Group (UKOMiC) Available from www.ukomic.com/documents/UKOMiC-Guidance-3rd-Edition.pdf [accessed July 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**



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



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 is about some common eating problems and why they might happen. It also suggests some practical ways to help manage them.

The booklet also has information for carers, family members and friends.

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.

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