

High temperature or fever

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

It could be a symptom of an [infection](#). Your body's immune system usually protects you from infection. But cancer and cancer treatment can stop the immune system from working properly (reduced immunity).

It is important to follow any advice your cancer treatment team gives you. Contact the hospital straight away on the number you have been given if:

- your temperature goes over 37.5°C (99.5°F)
- your temperature goes below 36°C (96.8°F)
- you suddenly feel unwell, even with a normal temperature
- you have any symptoms of an infection, such as feeling shivery, a sore throat, a cough, diarrhoea, needing to pass urine (pee) a lot, or discomfort when you pass urine.

If you have reduced immunity and an infection is not treated quickly, it can be difficult to get it under control. [Sepsis](#) (also called blood poisoning) is a serious and potentially life-threatening complication of an infection.

A high temperature or fever can be a symptom of some types of cancer, such as [lymphoma](#) and [mesothelioma](#). It can also be a symptom of an allergic reaction to a cancer drug.

Tips for avoiding infection during cancer treatment

- Take extra care to keep your [mouth clean](#). Your nurse will show you how to do this. Before having dental work, it is important to talk to your cancer doctor.
- Have good personal hygiene. Wash your hands regularly and always after using the toilet or before cooking or eating. Have a daily shower or bath, and do not share towels or flannels.
- Avoid people with sore throats, colds, flu, diarrhoea or vomiting, or infections.
- Stay away from crowded places where there are likely to be people with infections. This means avoiding rush hour and busy shopping centres.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Cook food properly and store it at the correct temperature. Keep raw and cooked foods apart.
- Take care when looking after animals. Try to avoid handling any animal waste.
- Avoid swimming or using a public pool or spa. If you are doing sports or social activities, try to go at quieter times.
- Your doctor or nurse may talk to you about having a flu vaccination and a [coronavirus](#) vaccination. Always get their advice before having any vaccinations.
- If you are [working](#), ask about support and adjustments to protect you. This could include working part-time or working from home while your immunity is reduced.
- Avoid places where there is likely to be a mould or fungus called aspergillus. It can grow in dead leaves, grain stores, compost piles or other decaying vegetation. Aspergillus may also be found in building materials such as brick, mortar and cement dust.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

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

- [Cancer treatment and sepsis](#)
- [Managing the symptoms of cancer](#)
- [Understanding chemotherapy](#)
- [Side effects from chemotherapy – easy read](#)

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

Further Macmillan support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Or visit macmillan.org.uk where you can [chat to us online](#).

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

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

Other useful contact details

- The UK Sepsis Trust – visit www.sepsistrust.org

Notes and questions
