

Practical tasks

It is difficult to know exactly how cancer and its treatment will affect you. You may be able to carry on with practical tasks as you did before. Or you may feel [too tired or weak](#) to manage everyday things such as:

Some of the effects of fatigue include:

- washing and dressing
- preparing meals or drinks
- grocery shopping
- laundry or housework.

This may be because you are coping with the [symptoms and side effects of treatment](#). If you have [surgery](#) your mobility may be affected while you recover. This can make you feel less confident about doing things around the house or going outside on your own.

Tell your specialist nurse or cancer doctor about any practical help you might need at home as you recover. They can give you advice and may be able to find help or equipment for you. They may be able to arrange a home help or carer to help with practical tasks.

Remember that family, friends, and neighbours can all help you with your everyday activities. Often, they will be glad to help with any practical tasks.

Tips for managing practical tasks

- Spread tasks out over the week. Try to do a little bit each day rather than lots at one time.
- Ask other people to help where possible.
- If possible, employ a cleaner to help. This may be expensive. Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to get home help from social services.
- Use long-handled dusters, mops and dustpans where possible to avoid stretching and bending.
- If possible, go grocery shopping with a friend or family member for extra help, or shop online.
- Shop at less busy times. Ask shop staff for help packing and carrying groceries to the car.
- When getting into the bath, sit on the side and slowly lift in one leg at a time. After your bath, you may find it easier to kneel up first and rest for a few moments before standing up.
- Sit down in the shower if you can, to avoid standing for too long. An occupational therapist may be able to get you a shower seat.
- Wear clothes that are easy to put on and take off.
- Sit down when you are getting dressed.
- Consider wearing a towelling dressing gown after a shower or bath. This takes less energy than drying yourself with a towel.
- If you can, sit down while preparing meals.
- Prepare extra meals or double portions when you feel less tired and freeze them for when you need them.
- Try having ready-made meals or pre-cooked food when you are most tired.

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:

- [Coping with fatigue \(tiredness\)](#)
- [Managing breathlessness](#)
- [Going home from hospital](#)

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

- British Red Cross – visit www.redcross.org.uk or call 0344 871 1111
- Wiltshire Farm Foods – visit www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com or call 0800 077 3100.

Notes and questions

