

The person who I look after

If you have cancer and care for someone else, it can be difficult to think about your own needs.

It might be difficult to go to appointments or make decisions about your own treatment when you are worried about the person you care for. You may be worried about the [physical symptoms](#) of cancer or the side effects of cancer treatment.

You may have different feelings. You might feel [anxious](#) about what could happen and how it might affect the person you care for. Feeling uncertain about the future can be difficult to cope with.

You may feel like you are on your own and that other people do not understand what you are going through. Your key worker or healthcare team can help support you. They can offer practical help and emotional support, or refer you to other services that can help.

If you think you may no longer be able to care for someone because of the cancer, it is important to let your healthcare team know straight away.

Tips for when you are looking after someone

- Getting support from family or friends can give you time to look after your needs as well as the person you care for. Try and talk openly about how people can help. Some people may not realise how much help you need.
- Make a list of day-to-day activities you need help with. It might include taking the children to school, or sitting with the person you care for while you attend a hospital appointment.
- It can be helpful to have a record of who is helping and what they are doing. You could create a shared calendar on your phone so that everyone can see it and add details.
- If you care for someone, you can have a carer's assessment. If you qualify for support, this could include care for the person you look after, to give yourself a break (respite care). Contact your [local adult social services department](#) to ask for a carer's assessment.
- You may try to ignore your feelings and focus on the person you care for. But paying attention to your feelings can help you feel less stressed, more in control and able to support the other person better.
- [Talking to other people](#) about the cancer and your concerns about the person you care for can help you cope with [your feelings](#). You may talk to family or friends. Or your keyworker and healthcare team can support you. They are there to listen to your worries and concerns. They can talk to you about counselling or [local services and support groups](#).
- It can be difficult to talk about cancer. You may worry how the person you look after will react. They may also be concerned about changes to your life, [work or finances](#). You do not need to have all the answers. But talking can help you make decisions together.
- You may prefer to talk to someone you don't know before friends or family. You could do any of the following:
 - Call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**.
 - Join a support group. You can use our [local area search](#) to find a support group near you, or ask your nurse.
 - [Talk to a professional](#). You can ask your GP how to get counselling or see a psychologist. A counsellor or psychologist helps you talk about your feelings. They may also help you change the way you think.
- Some people find writing about their feelings helpful. You may want to keep a diary or a blog, or use social media to explain how you feel. You could also join our [Online Community](#).
- Listening is just as important as talking. It can help you both understand what the other person is feeling. Try not to talk when one of you is busy or tired. Try to listen instead of thinking about what you are going to say next.

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 and relationships](#)
- [Looking after someone with cancer.](#)

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.

Our free [Macmillan Buddy](#) service can arrange weekly calls or visits with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

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

- Carers Direct – visit www.carersdirect.org or call **0203 904 4520**
- Carers Trust – visit carers.org or call:
 - **0300 772 9600** (England)
 - **0300 772 7701** (Scotland)
 - **0300 772 9702** (Wales)
- Carers UK – visit www.carersuk.org or call **0808 808 7777**

Notes and questions

