

# Managing my symptoms

Cancer can cause many different [symptoms](#). Some symptoms may only happen with certain [types of cancer](#). Others may be a side effect of [cancer treatment](#). Usually side effects get better during or after your treatment. But sometimes they are permanent. Sometimes side effects can appear [after your treatment](#) has finished.

The thought of symptoms and side effects can be frightening, but there are ways to help manage them, and many people can help you. Your healthcare team will explain the possible side effects to you. They may also give you written information.

If you are frightened or worried about a side effect, do not wait until your next appointment to tell someone. When you start treatment, you will be given details of who to call. This is usually a 24-hour contact number at your hospital.

It is a good idea to keep some details with you about the treatment you are having. This helps the hospital staff know which side effects you may get and what to do about them.

## Tips for managing my symptoms

- Keeping a diary or record of symptoms and side effects can be helpful. It may show a pattern that can help you talk with your cancer doctor or specialist nurse.
- [Pain](#) can affect your everyday life, but it can be managed. Describing your pain will help your doctors and nurses find the best way of treating it. There are many people that can help with pain management.
- If your symptoms are difficult to treat, your doctor may refer you to a specialist who deals with symptom control.
- Try to [keep active](#). Research has shown that being active and doing some gentle exercise can help with [tiredness](#). Without regular activity, our muscles get weak and tiredness gets worse. Being physically active can also improve your [appetite](#) and help you [sleep better](#).
- [Eating well](#) and keeping to a [healthy weight](#) can help you keep or regain your strength.
- Watching TV, reading, listening to music or short visits from friends and family can all help distract you from symptoms for a while.
- Talking about a symptom can make coping with it easier. You could talk to a partner, friend or family member. You can also talk to your healthcare team, GP or palliative care nurse.
- You may want to join a support group or [online community](#). These groups offer a chance to talk to other people who may be in a similar situation to you, and who may be facing the same challenges.
- [Complementary therapies](#) can help some people improve their physical or emotional health. Or they may help reduce cancer symptoms, or the side effects of cancer treatments.
- Cancer symptoms and the [side effects of treatment](#) can also affect your emotional wellbeing and relationships. There is no right or wrong way to feel, but there is support available.

## 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](http://be.macmillan.org.uk) such as:

- [How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer](#)
- [Managing cancer pain](#)
- [Managing the symptoms of cancer](#)
- [Side effects of cancer treatment.](#)

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](http://macmillan.org.uk) where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

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

- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) – visit [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)
- Macmillan Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) course – visit [learnzone.org.uk](http://learnzone.org.uk) or email [ServiceOpsLearning@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:ServiceOpsLearning@macmillan.org.uk)
- NHS – visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Notes and questions

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