

Fertility

Some cancer treatments can affect your [fertility](#). Fertility means being able to start a pregnancy. The effect on your fertility may be temporary, but some treatments cause long-term or permanent damage.

Your cancer doctor or nurse can explain your cancer treatment. Sometimes they may be able to reduce the effects of a treatment on your fertility. Or you may have a treatment that is less likely to cause problems. If cancer treatment might make you infertile, they should talk to you about [fertility preservation](#) before cancer treatment. This means storing your:

- sperm or testicular tissue
- eggs, embryos or ovarian tissue.

After cancer treatment, you may have other worries and questions. Your cancer doctor or GP can give you advice. They can also refer you to a fertility specialist if you need one. You may decide to have fertility [tests](#). Some people will need [fertility treatment](#) to be able to start a pregnancy. Or they may decide to become a parent in another way.

Fertility can be complicated and difficult to think about. There is often support that can help. You may find it helps to talk to someone close to you. If you prefer to talk to a counsellor, your GP or cancer doctor can arrange this. Many hospitals also have specialist nurses who can offer support. Fertility clinics have a counsellor you can talk to.

Things to consider

- Some decisions about fertility have to be made before cancer treatment starts. If being able to start a pregnancy is important to you or might be in the future, talk to your cancer doctor or nurse early on if you can. You do not need to be in a relationship, or a certain age, gender or sexual orientation.
- Even if your cancer treatment could damage fertility, your cancer doctor may talk to you about contraception to prevent a pregnancy. This is because some treatments can affect a developing baby. They can tell you how long you need to use contraception. They can also help you choose which type of contraception is right for you.
- If your fertility recovers after treatment, it is difficult to predict when this will be. It could happen without you being aware of it. If you do not want to start a pregnancy, you should keep using contraception, unless doctors tell you the infertility is permanent.
- If you are planning a pregnancy after cancer treatment, your cancer doctor can give you advice about when it is safest to start trying. They can explain any other things you may need to think about.
- Starting a pregnancy with fertility treatment can be an option for single people, straight couples, same-sex couples and people of all gender identities.
- The NHS may pay for fertility preservation and a certain number of fertility treatments. The funding rules about this are different in different areas of the UK. Your GP, cancer doctor or fertility doctor can give you information.
- Some people cannot have fertility treatment. Some decide they do not want treatment or prefer to become a parent another way such as adoption, fostering or co-parenting. Some people decide not to have children. This may be a clear choice they are happy with. Sometimes it is more complicated. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Everyone is different.
- Make sure you get all the support and information you need to make the right decision for you.

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 fertility](#)
- [Cancer and your sex life](#).

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 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 Infertility Counselling Association – visit www.bica.net
- Fertility Network UK – visit www.fertilitynetworkuk.org or call **0142 473 2361**
- Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) – visit www.hfea.gov.uk

Notes and questions
