

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle

There are many different things you can do to have a healthy lifestyle. These include:

- eating a balanced diet
- following sensible drinking guidelines
- managing weight loss or gain
- keeping active.

It is also important to look after your mental health and find ways to relax and manage stress.

Living a healthy lifestyle can help you before, during and after cancer treatment. It can be difficult to make changes to your lifestyle when you are coping with cancer. But small changes can make a big difference. Your doctor, nurse or a dietitian can give you advice and support.

Tips for maintaining a healthy lifestyle

- Aim to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Have meals based on starchy foods that give you energy, like brown rice, wholemeal bread, potatoes or pasta.
- Include protein in your diet, such as meat, fish, eggs, beans or lentils. Protein helps the cells in your body grow and repair.
- Have some dairy foods like milk or yoghurt, or dairy alternatives like soya drinks.
- Eat small amounts of unsaturated fats, such as vegetable oils and spreads, nuts, seeds and oily fish.
- Try to eat less saturated fats, which are found in fatty cuts of meat, fried food, cakes, chocolate and biscuits.
- Drink plenty of fluids (at least 6 to 8 glasses a day). Try to choose drinks that are low in sugar and caffeine.
- Try not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week. Try to have a few alcohol-free days every week.
- If you have lost weight due to cancer or treatment, try to add extra energy and protein to your diet. Your doctor, nurse or dietitian may talk to you about taking food supplements.
- If you have gained weight during cancer treatment, your doctor, nurse or dietitian can help you set a target for weight loss. Start the day with a healthy breakfast, choose healthy snacks like fruit or nuts and reduce your portion sizes gradually.
- To help you lose weight, use a smaller plate, eat slowly and avoid second helpings.
- Try to keep physically active during cancer treatment. This can help you keep to a healthy weight. It can also improve your strength, mood and heart and bone health.
- Choose activities that you enjoy, but avoid doing too much, too soon. If treatment is making you tired, you could do some light housework gardening, or go for a walk.
- Make time to relax every day. You could listen to soothing music or try meditation exercises.
- It is important to find ways of coping with stress. You could talk about your worries with family or friends, call the Macmillan Support Line or join Macmillan's Online Community.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resources:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Dietetic Association (BDA) • Mind • NHS.UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.bda.uk.com Tel 0121 200 8080 • www.mind.org.uk Tel 0300 123 3393 • www.nhs.uk/live-well

Further information

macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/maintaining-a-healthy-lifestyle

macmillan.org.uk/community

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk

- **Healthy eating and cancer**
- **The building-up diet**
- **Managing weight gain after cancer treatment**
- **Recipes for people affected by cancer**
- **Physical activity and cancer**

More information and 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

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.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these, visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.