

# My medication

You may take some medications on a regular basis, as part of your treatment. Or you may take medications when needed, for example to help with side effects. It can be difficult to remember what each of your medicines are for and how to take them.

If you are in hospital and you need medicines when you go home, you will usually be given enough for 7 days. The discharge letter to your GP will include information about your medication.

If you carry on taking medicines after this, you will need a repeat prescription. You can usually get this from your GP. But some drugs, such as chemotherapy or other cancer drugs, can only be prescribed by your hospital doctor and collected from the hospital pharmacy.

It can take up to 48 hours for your prescription to be ready. Make sure you ask your GP surgery for your repeat prescription before your medicine runs out. You can also ask the GP surgery to send it straight to your local pharmacy. Some pharmacies can request regular prescriptions for you.

Prescriptions are free in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, prescriptions are free for people with cancer. If you need prescriptions for anything related to cancer or its effects, you can apply for an exemption certificate. You need to fill in a form called an [FP92A](#), and get it signed by your GP. You can collect one of these from your GP surgery or hospital clinic.

## Tips for dealing with medication

- Always take your medicines exactly as prescribed to make sure they work as well as possible.
- Read the information leaflet with the medication. It will include any special instructions and give information about side effects.
- Don't take medicines that are out of date. You can check the bottle or packet for an expiry date.
- Keep them in their original packaging where you can clearly read the label. Store them carefully as instructed. This may be at room temperature or in a fridge. Keep them safe, where children cannot see or reach them.
- Return any unused medicines to the pharmacist. Do not put them in the bin or down the toilet.
- Your local pharmacist can give you advice about medicines. In some Boots stores, there are specially trained Boots Macmillan Information Pharmacists who can:
  - understand the different types of cancer and treatment
  - answer your questions about medication
  - listen to your concerns and provide emotional support.
- A medication planner is a good way to keep a record of what you need to take and when. You can download one from [macmillan.org.uk/medication-planner](https://macmillan.org.uk/medication-planner)
- If you find it difficult to remember when to take your different medicines, a pharmacist might organise them for you. This can also help you see if you miss a dose. The pharmacist can use one of the following:
  - Dosette boxes have small compartments that clearly show which tablet needs to be taken at what time.
  - Calendar blister packs have the day and time when the medicine should be taken printed on the pack.
- You can also buy pill organisers. These are plastic boxes with compartments for different days and times of the day. A family member or carer can put your medicines into these.
- If you are planning a trip abroad, ask your cancer doctor, specialist nurse, GP, practice nurse, pharmacist or travel clinic for advice about medicines you need to take.
- Make sure you have enough medication for your whole trip, including any delays. If you plan to travel with more than 3 months' supply of a controlled drug, [get advice from the Home Office before leaving or entering the UK.](#)

## 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:

- [Going home from hospital](#)
- [Help with the cost of cancer](#)
- [Looking after someone with cancer](#)
- [Managing cancer pain](#)
- [Managing cancer pain \(audiobook\)](#)
- [Travel and cancer.](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) is a course to help people after cancer treatment. It is a free 6-week self-management course that is run online. It was developed by Hope for the Community and Macmillan Cancer Support. To find out more, visit [macmillan.org.uk/hope-programme](http://macmillan.org.uk/hope-programme)

## 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 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

- Boots Macmillan Information Pharmacists – visit [boots.com/health-pharmacy-advice/macmillan](http://boots.com/health-pharmacy-advice/macmillan) or [macmillan.org.uk/boots-info-pharmacists](http://macmillan.org.uk/boots-info-pharmacists)
- Home Office drugs licensing unit – visit [gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-personal-licence](http://gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-personal-licence)
- National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) – [visit travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://visit-travelhealthpro.org.uk)
- Fit for Travel – visit [fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

## Notes and questions

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