

Practical tasks

It is difficult to know exactly how cancer and its treatment will affect you. You may be able to carry on with your practical daily activities as you did before. Or you may feel too tired or weak to manage everyday things such as:

- housework
- shopping
- preparing meals
- washing and dressing.

This may be because you are coping with the symptoms and side effects of treatment. If you have surgery, you may not be able to do your daily activities while you recover. This can make you feel less confident about doing things around the house or going outside on your own.

You may be worried about your mobility (walking and moving around). We have information about things that can help if you are having problems with [mobility](#).

Tell your cancer doctor or specialist nurse about any practical help you might need at home as you recover. They can give you advice and may be able to arrange help or equipment for you. Remember that family, friends and neighbours can all help you with your daily activities. Often, they will be happy to help.

Tips for managing practical tasks

- Make a list of tasks that need to be done.
- Try to do a little bit each day rather than everything at the same time. Pace yourself and take breaks.
- Ask family and friends to help you, or use a cleaning company if you can afford it.
- Take a few items at a time to the washing machine, or use a trolley.
- Ask for help with ironing and hanging out the washing.
- Plan your meals and make a list to help you save time and energy.
- Ask family or a friend to go with you so they can help with carrying and packing. Or ask others to get things for you when they do their own shopping.
- Try online shopping and have it delivered to you. If family or friends are too far away to help in person, they can do this for you.
- Ask the person at the checkout if someone can carry your shopping to the car.
- Wearing a [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower card](#) or lanyard can show staff or other shoppers that you may need help.
- Have a chair or stool in the kitchen so you can sit when preparing food or washing up.
- Plan meals that are easy to prepare.
- When you feel less tired, make extra dishes or double portions of food. You can freeze them for when you need them.
- Ask others to help with tasks such as peeling and chopping.
- Ask others to prepare meals that you can freeze and heat up.
- Have a bath, or sit down in the shower.
- Sit down when getting washed and dressed.
- Consider stretchy clothes that are easy to put on and take off, and do not need ironing. Loungewear or pyjamas might be easier, especially if you are not going out.

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:

- [Coping with fatigue \(tiredness\)](#)
- [Going home from hospital](#)
- [Managing breathlessness.](#)

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

- British Red Cross – visit redcross.org.uk or call **0344 871 1111**
- Wiltshire Farm Foods – visit wiltshirefarmfoods.com or call **0800 077 3100**

Notes and questions

