

# Worry, fear or anxiety

Many people with cancer feel [worried and anxious](#) about their situation. Feeling frightened and anxious is a natural reaction to an uncertain situation. [Uncertainty](#) can be one of the hardest feelings to deal with. Not knowing what is going to happen might make you feel irritable, angry and frightened.

Feeling that we have some control over our lives makes us feel secure. This allows us to enjoy the things we do and make plans for the future. But being diagnosed with cancer can take away that feeling of security. It can make you uncertain about what will happen.

If feeling frightened and anxious affects your ability to cope with day-to-day life, you may need help. Symptoms of anxiety may include not being able to concentrate, feeling irritable, being easily distracted, feeling restless and a constant feeling of dread.

You may also have physical symptoms including tense muscles, feeling short of breath, feeling dizzy, sweating, having a dry mouth, being [unable to sleep](#), feeling tired or digestive problems.

## Tips for managing worry, fear or anxiety

- If you feel like talking, talk to someone who is a good listener – this may be a friend, partner or family member, your doctor or nurse, or a professional counsellor or psychologist. You may also want to join a support group.
- If you use the internet, you can join an online support group or chat room. You could visit our [emotional support forum](#) to talk with people who are dealing with the emotional impact of cancer, share your experience, and ask an expert your questions.
- Doing something new can help distract and relax you. Some hobbies also help you express your feelings – for example, playing a musical instrument or painting.
- Think about your [breathing](#). Breathing in slowly and deeply through your nose and slowly out through your mouth can help you feel calmer.
- Put on music you enjoy and close your eyes – this can help you feel calmer.
- Do some [physical activity](#) – even a short walk can help with anxiety.
- Keep a diary of what makes you anxious. This can help you identify situations that make you feel anxious and avoid them if possible.
- Eat a [healthy diet](#). Avoid stimulants such as coffee, tobacco and alcohol.
- Try activities or treatments such as yoga, [meditation](#), [massage](#) or [reflexology](#) – these may help you relax and manage your anxiety.
- Having something to look forward to can help you feel less worried and more positive about life.

If you feel your anxiety is getting worse, speak to your GP, specialist nurse or a psychologist or counsellor. They can help you find ways of coping. Many people who have anxiety may also have depression. Speaking to your healthcare team is the best way to get the help you need. You may also find it helpful to contact [Anxiety 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:

- [How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer](#)
- [Your feelings after cancer treatment](#)
- [Worrying about cancer coming back](#)
- [Your feelings and cancer – easy read](#)

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.

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#).

Our free [Macmillan Buddy service](#) can arrange weekly calls or visits with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

## Other useful contact details

- Anxiety UK – visit [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk) or call the helpline on **03444 775 774** or text **07537 416 905**
- Mind – visit [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) or call **0300 123 3393**
- Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) – a licensed programme developed by Coventry University and Macmillan Cancer Support to help people who have or have had cancer to get on with their lives – visit <https://learnzone.org.uk>

## Notes and questions

---

---

---

---

---