



Young people with a relative or friend with cancer

This information is for young people who have a relative or friend with cancer and aims to help you understand and cope with your situation. It offers ways of finding help from health professionals, local services, national organisations or books. Many young people know somebody affected by cancer and nearly half have a family member with the disease.

Coping with how you are feeling

When someone in your family has cancer, things can change for everyone. You may find people in your family react differently and have different ways of coping. You may feel scared, angry, guilty, lonely, neglected, embarrassed, anxious or confused.

Remember that feelings aren't 'good' or 'bad', they are just feelings and they are normal. Many other people in your situation feel the same way. Accepting these feelings and talking about them is a good way of coping through sharing. But if you find it hard to talk, try writing down how you feel or draw a picture of your feelings instead.

Support and sharing

It can be hard to talk about cancer. It's possible that the person who has cancer may not be ready to talk when you are. Some of your questions could upset them. This may be because they don't know how to answer or your worries remind them of their own. You may find it helpful to talk to someone else as well.

Think about whether there is someone in your own 'support circle' of people who could help you. These could be parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbours, teachers, school counsellors, religious leaders, youth club workers, older brothers and sisters or friends your own age. It can really help to talk.

Please see details on the next page of special organisations which may be able to help.

Information

Worrying about cancer, its treatments and tests can be hard. Having accurate information about the type of cancer your friend or relative has and the treatment they are having can help you feel less confused and scared about what is going on.

Sometimes talking with your friend or relative about what it is really like is the best way to deal with these feelings. If they agree, it may be helpful to visit the hospital with them and talk to one of the health professionals involved in their care.

You might want to ask questions like:

- What kind of cancer is it and where is it?
- What kind of treatment will be used?
- How long will the treatment last?
- How do people feel having this treatment?
- Will they get better?
- What will happen to me while they are having treatment?
- What can I do to help?

On the next page there are some websites that can provide information.

It is a good idea to talk with someone about any information you find to check its accuracy and what applies to your friend or relative.

The Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC) has additional information and booklets that you may find helpful. Please drop in for further advice and support.

Helpline: 020 3826 2555
Mon - Fri: 9.30am - 4.30pm
www.ljmc.org

Here is a list of people and organisations who may be able to help you:

| Contact | What they provide | How to contact |
|---|--|--|
| Grove House St Albans | Can provide support for children & teenagers. The family support team includes social workers, counsellors and play therapists. | Tel: 01727 731000 or 01727 731013 Mon - Fri: 9.00am - 5.00pm |
| HOPE | Offers online, telephone and text support to young people aged 11+ when someone close to them has a life-threatening illness. | Tel: 01989 566317 www.hopesupport.org.uk |
| Link Fountains Mill Young People's Centre Uxbridge | Information and counselling service for young people aged 14-25, who live, work or study in the London Borough of Hillingdon. | Tel: 01895 277222 Mon - Fri: 10.30am - 7.30pm |
| Macmillan Cancer Support | Cancer information for teenagers and young adults. | Tel: 0808 808 0000 www.macmillan.org.uk |
| Macmillan social work team Mount Vernon Hospital Northwood | Support for patients and family members (including young people) of patients having treatment at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre | Tel: 020 3826 2402 |
| Riprap | Website for teenagers who have a parent with cancer. Stories of others' experiences and a chance to explore emotions. You can ask questions or ask for advice through the website. | www.riprap.org.uk |
| Signpost Watford Hemel Hempstead | Counselling, coaching and other support to help young people aged 11-25. Also provide workshops for parents of young people. Drop-in appointments are available. Call for details. | Tel: 01923 239495 or 07444 768078 www.signpostcounselling.co.uk |
| Young Carers Net Created by Carers Trust | Provides support for young people under 18, who help to look after someone in their family who has an illness. | www.youngcarers.net youngcarers@carers.org |
| Harlington Hospice London Borough of Hillingdon South | Counselling and play therapy service for children and adolescents age 4-17. Over 16's can self-refer. | www.harlingtonhospice.org Tel: 020 8759 0453 |

The following table shows a selection of resources available which may help you. Many of these resources are available from the LJMC.

| Title | Description |
|--|---|
| <p>A guide for young people looking after someone who has cancer. by Macmillan Cancer Support</p> | <p>A guide for young people who are caring for someone who has cancer, by young people: 'We've been there. And we came through it. That's why we wanted to share our experiences with you, so you know that there are people you can turn to. And that there are things you can do to look after yourself.' https://www.macmillan.org.uk/documents/cancerinfo/ifsomeoneelsehascancer/</p> |
| <p>It's Like This... Copies available at the LJMC</p> | <p>DVD for teenagers with chapters on what life can be like when a parent or sibling is ill or dies. www.canteen.org.au</p> |
| <p>Life on the refrigerator door. by Alice Kuipers</p> | <p>Story written as a series of notes left on a fridge door, by a mother going through breast cancer treatment and her teenage daughter.</p> |
| <p>Medikidz Explain Breast Cancer by Breast Cancer Care (BCC220)</p> | <p>These are written in graphic novel format telling a story to help young people understand the science behind cancer. The Medikidz are five energetic, larger-than-life superheroes who live in Mediland, a living, moving virtual world inside the human body.</p> |
| <p>Medikidz Explain Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer roycastle.org/medikidz</p> | |
| <p>When your parent has cancer: a guide for teens by National Institute of Health</p> | <p>This guide is for young people who have a parent with cancer. You are not alone. Find out what has helped other teens get through this tough time. This guide includes quotes from teens who have a parent with cancer and checklists to help you get support from others. https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/when-your-parent-has-cancer</p> |

If the cancer is not going to get better, please ask at the LJMC about further information that is available.

For suggestions to help younger children, see the next page.

If there are younger children in your home, these books may be helpful to share:

| Title | Description |
|---|--|
| Mummy's Lump by Breast Cancer Care (BCC164) | Picture story book for younger children whose mother has cancer. |
| Nurse Ted - A Children's Guide to Cancer by Ffion Jones, Kerry Foster-Mitchell | A picture book for children whose parent has cancer. This child friendly story helps parents/carers who have cancer explain their diagnosis and treatment to their children. |
| The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside | Wherever Jenny goes, her worries follow her - in a big bag. Jenny decides they will have to go, but who can help her? |
| The Secret C: straight talking about cancer by Julia Stokes | Aimed at children aged 7-10. Uses pictures, captions and straightforward language to explain cancer, treatments and side-effects. Encourages open communication and has simple messages. |
| What does it (cancer) mean? Visiting hospital Life at home Activity book by BUPA | Interactive magazines for children with a relative or friend with cancer. Available online at: bupa.co.uk/bupa-cancer-promise/i-know-someone-with-cancer |
| When Granny Lost Her Hair by Sandy Green | A picture book to help explain cancer-related hair loss to children. |
| Why Mum? A small child dealing with a big problem by Catherine Thornton | A children's picture book exploring the serious illness of a parent through the eyes of a 7 year old. It shows how life changes for him and the family and how he adapts to it. |