

“ I know someone with cancer ”

# LIFE AT HOME

What might be happening in your family

WAYS TO HELP OUT

FAMILY TIME

Bupa 

# ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

'Life at home' has been produced by Bupa. It has been written with the advice of cancer specialists, healthcare professionals and families affected by cancer.

We hope you find it useful.

We want to say a big thanks to all the kids and families who've shared their stories with us for this booklet.



Check out these other booklets in the "I know someone with cancer" series:



You can also find electronic versions of these booklets online at [bupa.co.uk/iknowsomeonewithcancer](http://bupa.co.uk/iknowsomeonewithcancer)

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## Hello

If someone you know is having treatment for cancer, you might have found that some things have been changing at home.

In this booklet, we'll take a closer look at some of the changes that different treatments can cause, and help you understand a bit more about what's going on.

... 99... 100!  
 That's the longest I've ever hula hooped for! Hi, I'm Izzy by the way.

We'll also hear from other kids who know someone with cancer, and a top doctor answers some questions that you might be thinking about.

Plus there are loads of ideas for things to do with your family, and ways you can help out around the house. Have a look...

Mmmm... FOOD!  
 Hey, I'm Jake.  
 Check out this mag. It's got some good things in it.



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# ASK DOC

The person you know may have finished their treatment now, or be in the middle of some.

Doctor Luke James answers some questions you may have if the person you know is having treatment.

## Q Why is the person I know often tired?

**A** Some people can feel a bit sleepy after having an **operation** or treatment for their cancer. If the person you know feels a bit tired, it might be worth making a plan to do something together when they have a bit more energy.

Look up the words in **bold** on p14 and 15

## Q Will they need to go back to hospital?

**A** People who have treatment for cancer will go back to hospital for check ups with their Doctor. They have to have different types of treatments and sometimes more than one operation. They will let you know though.

## Q When will things be normal again?

**A** It can take time for people to recover as they might need more treatment. It can feel strange at first but you should get used to the change and after a while things should start to feel normal at home again.

## Q If the person gets ill does that mean they have cancer again?

**A** Just like anyone else, people who have had cancer can still get coughs, colds and other common illnesses. So if they're poorly, it doesn't mean the cancer has come back.

How was school lizzy?



It was OK today! I liked seeing my friends.



“ When my mum was ill, I felt upset sometimes and confused. When Mum was in hospital, I missed her. Doing my usual stuff after school like drama, swimming and ballet or seeing my friends helped me feel better. ”

## Q Will the cancer come back?

**A** Many people don't get cancer again but the doctors will keep a close eye on the person and ask them to go for regular check-ups at the hospital just in case.

## Q What if I feel confused about things?

**A** It's completely normal to feel worried about things because it's a new and strange situation to be in. You might not be sure what to expect, so asking the person with cancer, another adult or friend any questions can help.

## School stuff

It can really help if your school knows about what's going on at home. That way, they will understand if you're having problems - like these things...

I've found it harder to get to school on time.



I'm finding it impossible to concentrate at school.

My friends don't understand what I'm going through.

I got a bad mark in something I'm usually good at.

I don't like being away from the person who has cancer.

Tick whatever's been happening and write anything else below.

Ask an adult in your family if they've spoken to your school and tell them about anything that's worrying you - or tell your teacher.

## How to

## HELP AT HOME

You could lend a hand around the house by making something yummy.

**Thirst quenchers!**

Have a go at making these delicious drinks for your family.

**Sunset slurper** Put some ice in a glass and half fill with orange juice. Slowly pour in cranberry juice so it sits on top before sinking down like a sunset!

**Super smoothie** Use a fork to mash up any soft fruits you have like banana, kiwi, strawberries or raspberries. Put them in a jug with some natural yoghurt and milk then use a hand whisk to mix together. Or, if you have a clean jam jar, pour some mixture inside, pop the lid on and shake!

**Pitta pockets**

Here's an easy dinner you could make by yourself!

- 1 Pop some mini pittas in the toaster.
- 2 When they've cooled a bit, carefully cut them in half widthways and open to make pockets.
- 3 Stuff them with small handfuls of cheese, plus some sliced vegetables or meat. Yum!

Be careful when using sharp knives. Always get a grownup to help you!

To make a pitta pizza, spread tomato puree on top of a pitta, add grated cheese and ask an adult to pop it under the grill.

You could use a raspberry or strawberry instead of a cherry.

**Banana split**  
This tasty treat is bananalicious!

Cut a banana in half lengthways. Put a scoop or two of your favourite ice cream in the middle, then squeeze on some chocolate sauce. Sprinkle with nuts and top with a squirt of cream and a cherry!

**Help-out vouchers!**

Make jobs more fun with these vouchers. Here's how:

- Write down some jobs you could do on pieces of coloured card. Check out the picture below for ideas!
- Give the cards to the person you know.

I can help out by looking after frog!



- When they need a hand they can choose one of the vouchers and give it to you. Then get helping!



“When my mum was poorly, she didn't want to cook as much, so we got takeaways. I thought it was terrible! My older brother helped out with shopping and cooking and things.”

Here are some more ideas!

- \* Do some hoovering
- \* Feed the cat
- \* Wash the car
- \* Look after my brother/sister
- \* Dust the shelves

If you don't want to make vouchers, just ask what useful things you could do.



# CHANGES

When someone has treatment for cancer, it can cause some changes to how they look and feel. Here are some of them.

## Losing hair

When someone has **chemotherapy** (key-mo-therapy) or **radiotherapy**, their hair might fall out. If this happens, it will probably seem strange at first but you'll get used to it pretty soon.

Some people who lose their hair wear a hat, a headscarf or a bandana. Or, they might wear a wig. They could get a wig to match their normal hair, or they might fancy something completely different. You may be able to go with them to choose it.

✦ When the treatment is over their hair will grow back again. It often grows back curly at first, even if it wasn't curly before.



Thanks for giving me a lift Jake!

Wigs can be a bit hot to wear, so if the person you know has one, they might not want to wear it all the time.

## Weight change

Sometimes when people are having their treatment, they put on or lose some weight - this might make them look a bit different.

✦ Like other changes, you'll get used to it before too long. They're just the same person as before and their weight will probably go back to what it was after the treatment is over.

“ When my dad was having chemotherapy, his hair started to go thin and fall out. It sounds a bit weird, but I liked to sit with him and help him to brush it out! ”

## Tiredness

People having cancer treatment often feel zapped of their energy for a while afterwards, and may need lots of rest. They may also feel emotional, and be a bit weepy sometimes. They might get bad-tempered sometimes too.

✦ While the person has less energy, you might do more things with other people in your family than you did before. Then whenever the person has more energy, you can do some good things together again.



Look up the words in **bold** on p14 and 15

## Why changes happen

You may wonder why treatment can make a person feel horrible **side effects** when it's supposed to be making them better. And that's a good question!



✦ Cancer medicine needs to be very powerful for it to work properly. But because it is so strong it can damage some of the normal **cells** - like hair cells - as well as the cancer cells. This is why hair sometimes falls out.

✦ Remember that the medicine's aim is to help make them better and that it is doing them good - even though it may sometimes make them look and feel poorly. And when treatment is over, normal cells should grow again.

The doctors will try to make sure the person's medicine causes as few side effects as possible.

If any changes are worrying you, write them down here and chat to an adult about them.

You can talk to ChildLine online or by phone whenever you need to. Whatever your worry, it's better out than in.

ChildLine  
0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

ChildLine is a service provided by the NSPCC. Registered charity numbers 216401 and SC037717.

# 10 IDEAS

## for fun family time

Sometimes it's nice to hang out at home and spend a bit of time with your family. Here are some ideas for things you could do together.

Oops! There goes my homework.



### 1



#### Games night

Get everyone to choose a favourite game to play. It could be a card game, a board game or even a computer game. Play each one and see who wins the most games to become the games night champion!

### 3

#### The YES/NO game

Take it in turns to answer questions without saying yes or no. The person who answers the most questions wins.

### 4

#### Face race

Each player needs a small flat food item, like a small chocolate or a biscuit. Play after dinner when you're all sitting around the table.

\* Tip your heads back and place the food in the middle of your forehead. The aim of the game is to get the food into your mouth, just by wiggling and moving your face! If it falls off, put it back on your forehead and start again.

\* The winner is the first to get it into their mouth. Silly faces guaranteed!



### 2

#### House hunting

Grab a digital camera to take some very close-up pictures of objects all around your home. Now test your family by showing them the close-ups to see who can guess what each object is and where it is. Try this one, too:



Answer: It's a piece of bread in a toaster.

### 5

#### Sock wars!

You'll need a large bucket or bowl and five to 10 socks for each player, rolled up into balls. Take it in turns to try and throw your socks into the bowl – make sure you're all the same distance away! The player with the least socks in the bowl at the end has to sniff everyone else's feet. POOOEEEEEE!

### 6

#### Caption competition

Dig out a family photo and stick it on the fridge. Each write a caption for it on a sticky note and vote for the funniest one. Try it here!



### 7

#### Indoor picnic

Make dinner time different by asking if you can spread a rug down on the living room floor and have a picnic dinner.



Study this pic. Now close your eyes and see how many things you can remember!

### 8

#### It's a draw!

Draw funny portraits of each other using these techniques.

\* Set yourself time limits. Try a one-minute, a five-minute and a 10-minute portrait. Which one looks the best?

\* Draw each other without taking your pen or pencil off

\* Try it without looking down at the paper – just at each other.

\* the paper. No cheating!



### 9

#### Story time

Snuggle up on the sofa with a favourite book and choose someone in the family to read it out loud. Try doing different voices for all the characters.

### 10

#### Sofa sports

Hold some cool contests without leaving the living room. Try these ones!

- ✓ Biggest bubble gum bubble
- ✓ Staring contest – first to blink loses
- ✓ Pass the remote control to each other just using your feet!



# WHO'S WHO?

Find out about some of the medical people that the person you know might see...

## Nurses

A few different nurses might come round to see the person you know either during or after they have had cancer treatment:

**Community nurses** are from your local area and visit people in their own homes. They give medicine, care and advice about what's going on.

**Macmillan nurses** work for a charity called Macmillan Cancer Support. They specialise in caring for people with cancer.

As a community nurse, I'm there for patients and their families if they need to chat. And I can help to answer all sorts of questions.



Look up the words in **bold** on p14 and 15

**Oncology nurses** - if the person you know is having **chemotherapy** treatment at home, an **oncology** nurse will come round to give the medicine and clean any tubes.

## GP

Your local family doctor might check the **progress** of the person you know. The hospital will have contacted the GP about how the person you know is getting on.

## Counsellor

A specialist that adults or children can talk to about feelings and any worries. Some people find it useful to talk to someone like this who is outside their family.

## Occupational therapist

Someone who can help patients to carry out everyday tasks, or help them to find new ways of doing things while they are feeling unwell.

Not everyone who has had cancer will have medical people visit them at home.

# PLANNER PAD

Use this page to jot down useful information!

**FUN DAYS COMING UP**



Fill this in to remind everyone about any activities you do after school or at the weekend, and so you remember any jobs you do to help at home!

Add the numbers of people in your family or friends' parents who may give you lifts to places:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITIES/CLUBS

## WAYS TO HELP OUT

MON

TUES

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT

SUN



# GLOSSARY

**A whole load of new words you might have heard in a handy A-Z.**

## ANAESTHETIC

(*an-ess-thet-ic*) This is a type of painkiller. General anaesthetic makes people fall into a nice deep sleep before an **operation**. Local anaesthetic numbs the part of the body being operated on – the person stays awake but shouldn't feel any pain.

**BIOPSY** (*by-op-see*) Removing a sample of tissue **cells** from the body to test them.

**BLOOD TEST** Taking a small sample of blood and examining it.

**CELLS** The tiny building blocks that make up the body.

**CENTRAL LINE** A tube that is put into the chest. One end stays outside the body and medicine is put into it.

**CHEMOTHERAPY** (*key-mo-therapy*) Drugs used to destroy cancer cells. Also known as chemo.

**DIAGNOSIS** (*dye-ag-no-sis*) When doctors have worked out exactly what is wrong with a patient, and can give the illness a name.

**DRIP** A way of slowly putting medicine into the body. The medicine is in a bag and 'drips' down a tube into a vein.

**HICKMAN LINE** A type of **central line**.

**IMMUNE SYSTEM** The body's natural protection against diseases.

**IN-PATIENT** Someone who stays overnight in hospital.

**INTRAVENOUS** When medicine is given straight into a vein.

**ONCOLOGIST** (*on-kol-oh-jist*) Another name for a doctor who is a cancer specialist.

**ONCOLOGY** (*on-kol-oh-jee*) The study or treatment of cancer.

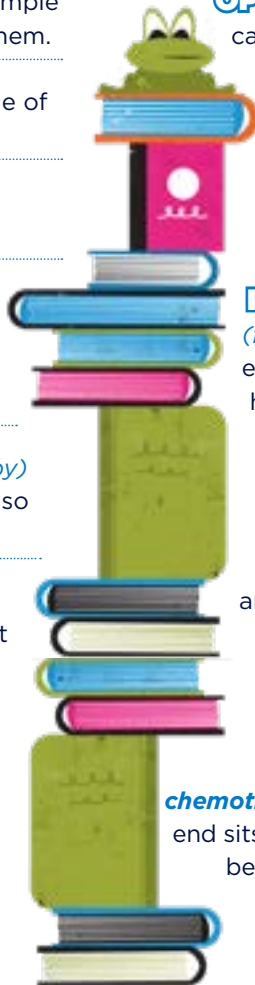
**OPERATION** When a surgeon carefully works on the body to try and repair it.

**OUT-PATIENT** Someone having hospital treatment who doesn't need to stay overnight.

**PHYSIOTHERAPY** (*fizz-ee-oh-therapy*) Special exercises and massages that help people move their bodies again after some types of treatment.

**PICC LINE** This is a tube that's put into someone's arm. One end stays outside the body and **chemotherapy** medicine is put into it.

**PORTACATH** A tube put into the chest to make **chemotherapy** injections easier. The end sits just under the skin and you'll be able to see a little bump where it is.



## PRIMARY CANCER

The first place where a cancer grows.

**PROGNOSIS** The way an illness is likely to affect someone in the future.

**PROGRESS** How well a person is doing with their treatment.

**PROSTHESIS** (*pross-thee-sis*) Sometimes the best way to get rid of cancer is to remove the part of the body where it is. A prosthesis is an artificial body part that replaces the bit that's been removed.

**RADIOTHERAPY** A cancer treatment using powerful X-rays.

**RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY** Doctors sometimes need to remove a part of the body where the cancer is. If this happens, they may be able to rebuild, or *reconstruct*, the part that has been removed. This is called reconstructive surgery.

**RECOVERY** Getting well again and returning to normal.

**REMISSION** This is when treatment has gone well and there are no more signs of cancer. Remission can come in two different forms.

Complete remission is when cancer or leukemia can't be detected by scans, X-rays, blood tests and so on.

Partial remission is when the treatment has killed some of the cancer cells, but not all of them. It can still be seen on scans, but doesn't seem to be growing. The doctor might also call this a 'stable disease'.

Yeah!



**SCAN** An image of the inside of the body made by a special computer.

**SCAR** A mark left on the skin after an **operation**.

## SECONDARY CANCER

Another place in the body where cancer is found if it has spread from the **primary cancer**.

**SHARPS BIN** A safe place to throw away used needles.

**SIDE EFFECTS** Ways that medicine could make a person look or feel unwell – even while it's making them better.

**SOCIAL WORKER** Someone who may help your family deal with changes at home since the person you know has had cancer.

**STEROID** A type of drug that can help treat cancer. A **side effect** of it can be to make someone put on weight.

**SURGERY** When a doctor carefully works on a person's body so they can fix something inside or remove something, like a **tumour**.

**SYMPTOMS** Changes in a person's body or the way they feel that are a sign they may be unwell.

**TUMOUR** A growth or lump in the body. Not all tumours are cancerous. A **benign** tumour *isn't* cancer. A **malignant** tumour *is* cancer.





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