

Do anti-cancer diets work?

There has been a lot of publicity about alternative diets for treating cancer over the past few years. Many dramatic claims for cures have been made. It's understandable that people may be attracted to diets that seem to offer the hope of a cure. However, there isn't good evidence that these diets can make a cancer shrink, increase a person's chance of survival, or cure the disease.

Some people get satisfaction from following these special diets, but others find them quite boring and even unpleasant to eat, and time-consuming to prepare. Some diets may lack important nutrients or be unbalanced in other ways, and may even be harmful.

It can be confusing to be faced with conflicting advice about what to eat, but most doctors and specialist nurses recommend a well-balanced and enjoyable diet, as described in this booklet.

Summary

We hope this information has answered some of your questions and has given you some ideas about how you can improve your health and follow a healthy diet.

If you're thinking of making changes to what you eat, you can get more advice from your doctor, dietitian or specialist nurse. They can offer you information and advice tailored to your particular situation. You may also find some of the organisations on pages 35–38 helpful.

How we can help you

Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face. But you don't have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way.

Get in touch

Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment,
London SE1 7UQ

Questions about cancer?

Call free on **0808 808 00 00**
(Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm)

www.macmillan.org.uk

Hard of hearing?

Use textphone
0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

Non-English speaker?

Interpreters are available.

Clear, reliable information about cancer

We can help you by phone, email, via our website and publications or in person. And our information is free to everyone affected by cancer.

Macmillan Support Line

Our free, confidential phone line is open Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. Our cancer support specialists provide clinical, financial, emotional and practical information and support to anyone affected by cancer. Call us on **0808 808 00 00** or email us via our website, **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**

Information centres

Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres, and offer you the opportunity to speak with someone face-to-face. Find your nearest one at **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres**

Publications

We provide expert, up-to-date information about different types of cancer, tests and treatments, and information about living with and after cancer. We can send you free information in a variety of formats, including booklets, leaflets, fact sheets, and audio CDs. We can also provide our information in Braille and large print.

You can find all of our information, along with several videos, online at **macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformation**

Review our information

Help us make our resources even better for people affected by cancer. Being one of our reviewers gives you the chance to comment on a variety of information including booklets, fact sheets, leaflets, videos, illustrations and website text.

Need out-of-hours support?

You can find a lot of information on our website, **macmillan.org.uk**. For medical attention out of hours, please contact your GP for their out-of-hours service.

Someone to talk to

When you or someone you know has cancer, it can be difficult to talk about how you're feeling. You can call our cancer support specialists to talk about how you feel and what's worrying you.

We can also help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face-to-face with people who understand what you're going through.

Professional help

Our Macmillan nurses, doctors and other healthcare and social care professionals offer expert treatment and care. They help individuals and families deal with cancer from diagnosis onwards, until they no longer need this help.

You can ask your GP, hospital consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals available in your area, or call us.

Support for each other

No one knows more about the impact cancer has on a person's life than those who have been affected by it themselves. That's why we help to bring people with cancer and carers together in their communities and online.

Support groups

You can find out about support groups in your area by calling us or by visiting [macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport)

Online community

You can also share your experiences, ask questions, get and give support to others in our online community at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)

Financial and work-related support

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. Some people may have to stop working.

If you've been affected in this way, we can help. Call the Macmillan Support Line and one of our cancer support specialists will tell you about the benefits and other financial help you may be entitled to.

We can also give you information about your rights at work as an employee, and help you find further support.

Macmillan Grants

Money worries are the last thing you need when you have cancer. A Macmillan Grant is a one-off payment for people with cancer, to cover a variety of practical needs including heating bills, extra clothing, or a much-needed break.

Find out more about the financial and work-related support we can offer at **macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport**

Learning about cancer

You may find it useful to learn more about cancer and how to manage the impact it can have on your life.

You can do this online on our Learn Zone – **macmillan.org.uk/learnzone** – which offers a variety of e-learning courses and workshops. There's also a section dedicated to supporting people with cancer – ideal for people who want to learn more about what their relative or friend is going through.

Other useful organisations

Association for Nutrition

28 Portland Place,
London W1B 1LY
Tel 020 7291 8385

Email info@

associationfornutrition.org

**www.associationfor
nutrition.org**

Provides an online directory
of local nutritional therapists.

British Dietetic Association (BDA)

5th Floor, Charles House,
148–9 Great Charles
Street, Queensway,
Birmingham B3 3HT

Tel 0121 200 8080

Email info@bda.uk.com

www.bda.uk.com

Provides training and facilities
for registered dietitians
and has information on the
difference between dietitians
and nutritional therapists.

British Nutrition Foundation

High Holborn House,
52–54 High Holborn,
London WC1V 6RQ

Tel 020 7404 6504

Email

postbox@nutrition.org.uk

www.nutrition.org.uk

Distributes information and
advice on the relationship
between diet, physical
activity and health.

CORE

3 St Andrews Place,
London NW1 4LB

Tel 020 7486 0341

Email info@corecharity.org.uk

www.corecharity.org.uk

Funds research into a range
of gut, liver, intestinal and
bowel illnesses. Its website
provides information on
digestive disorders, treatments
and coping with the effects of
digestive disorders.

Diabetes UK

Macleod House, 10 Parkway,
London NW1 7AA

Careline 0845 120 2960

(Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)

Tel 020 7424 1000

Email

careline@diabetes.org.uk

www.diabetes.org.uk

Gives information and support on any aspect of managing diabetes, including medication, diet and exercise.

General cancer support organisations

Cancer Support Scotland (Tak Tent)

Flat 5, 30 Shelley Court,
Gartnavel Complex,
Glasgow G12 0YN

Tel 0141 211 0122

Email info@cancersupportscotland.org

www.cancersupportscotland.org

www.cancersupportscotland.org

Offers information and support for cancer patients, families, friends and healthcare professionals. Runs a network of monthly support groups across Scotland.

Also provides counselling and complementary therapies.

Irish Cancer Society

43–45 Northumberland Road,
Dublin 4, Ireland

Cancer Helpline

1800 200 700 (Mon–Thurs,
9am–7pm, Fri, 9am–5pm)

Email helpline@irishcancer.ie

www.cancer.ie

Operates Ireland's only freephone cancer helpline, which is staffed by nurses trained in cancer care.

Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres

8 Newton Place,
Glasgow G3 7PR

Tel 0300 123 1801

Email enquiries@maggiescentres.org

maggiescentres.org

www.maggiescentres.org

Located throughout the country, Maggie's Centres offer free, comprehensive support for anyone affected by cancer. You can access information, benefits advice, and emotional or psychological support.

Tenovus

9th Floor, Gleider House,
Ty Glas Road, Llanishen,
Cardiff CF14 5BD

Freephone helpline

0808 808 1010

Tel 029 2076 8850

Email post@tenovus.com

www.tenovus.org.uk

Provides a variety of services to people with cancer and their families, including counselling and a freephone cancer helpline.

The Ulster

Cancer Foundation

40–44 Eglantine Avenue,
Belfast BT9 6DX

Freephone helpline

0800 783 3339

Helpline email

infocis@ulstercancer.org

Tel 028 9066 3281

Email info@ulstercancer.org

www.ulstercancer.org

Provides a variety of services for people with cancer and their families, including a free telephone helpline, which is staffed by specially trained nurses with experience in cancer care.

Counselling and emotional support

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

BACP House,

15 St John's Business Park,
Lutterworth LE17 4HB

Tel 01455 883 300

Email enquiries@bacp.co.uk

www.bacp.co.uk and

www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk

Promotes awareness and availability of counselling, and signposts people to appropriate services.

Has a database on the website where you can search for a qualified counsellor.

UK Council for

Psychotherapy (UKCP)

2nd Floor, Edward House,
2 Wakley Street,
London EC1V 7LT

Tel 020 7014 9955

Email info@ukcp.org.uk

www.psychotherapy.org.uk

UKCP holds the national register of psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors, listing those

practitioner members who meet exacting standards and training requirements.

Support for carers

Carers UK

20 Great Dover Street,
London SE1 4LX

Tel 020 7378 4999

Advice line 0808 808 7777
(Wed and Thurs, 10am–12pm
and 2–4pm)

Email from the website

www.carersuk.org

Offers information and support to carers. Can put people in contact with local support groups. Has national offices for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

Carers Scotland

The Cottage, 21 Pearce
Street, Glasgow G51 3UT

Tel 0141 445 3070

Email

info@carerscotland.org

**[www.carersuk.org/
scotland](http://www.carersuk.org/scotland)**

Carers Wales

River House, Ynsbridge
Court, Gwaelod-y-Garth,
Cardiff CF15 9SS

Tel 029 2081 1370

Email info@carerswales.org

www.carersuk.org/wales

Carers Northern Ireland

58 Howard Street,
Belfast BT1 6PJ

Tel 028 9043 9843

Email info@carersni.org

**[www.carersuk.org/
northernireland](http://www.carersuk.org/northernireland)**

Further resources

Related Macmillan information

You may want to order some of the booklets mentioned in this booklet. These include:

- *Move more*
- *Physical activity and cancer*
- *Weight management after cancer treatment*

Other booklets in this series:

- *Eating problems and cancer*
- *Recipes from Macmillan Cancer Support*
- *The building-up diet*

To order, visit **be.macmillan.org.uk** All of our information is also available online at **macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformation**

Audio resources

Our high-quality audio materials, based on our variety of booklets, include information about cancer types, different treatments and about living with cancer. To order your free CD, visit **be.macmillan.org.uk** or call **0808 808 00 00**.

Useful websites

A lot of information about cancer is available on the internet. Some websites are excellent; others have misleading or out-of-date information. The sites listed here are considered by nurses and doctors to contain accurate information and are regularly updated.

Macmillan Cancer Support
www.macmillan.org.uk Find out more about living with the practical, emotional and financial effects of cancer.

Our website contains expert, accurate, up-to-date information about cancer and its treatments, including:

- all the information from our 100+ booklets and 350+ fact sheets
- videos featuring real-life stories from people affected by cancer and information from medical professionals
- how Macmillan can help, the services we offer and where to get support
- how to contact our cancer support specialists, including an email form to send your questions
- local support groups search, links to other cancer organisations and a directory of information materials
- a huge online community of people affected by cancer sharing their experiences, advice and support.

**www.cancer.gov
(National Cancer Institute – National Institute of Health – USA)**

Gives comprehensive information on cancer and treatments.

**www.cancer.org
(American Cancer Society)**

Nationwide community-based health organisation dedicated to eliminating cancer. It aims to do this through research, education and advocacy.

**www.cancerequality.org.uk
(Cancer Equality)**

Aims to reduce the inequalities experienced by people with cancer from black and minority ethnic and refugee communities. It produces resources for people from those groups about coping with eating difficulties.

**www.cancerhelp.org.uk
(Cancer Research UK)**

Contains patient information on all types of cancer and has a cancer research clinical trials database.

www.food.gov.uk
(Food Standards Agency)

An independent government department that aims to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food.

www.healthtalkonline.org
www.youthhealthtalk.org
(site for teens and young adults)

Both websites contain information about some cancers and have video and audio clips of people talking about their experiences of cancer and its treatments.

www.iarc.fr
(International Agency for Research on Cancer)

Has details of international dietary guidelines.

www.library.nhs.uk
(National Library of Health)

National UK health information site covers all aspects of health, illness and treatments.

www.nhs.uk
(NHS Choices)

NHS Choices is the online 'front door' to the NHS. It is the country's biggest health website and gives all the information you need to make choices about your health.

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
(NHS Direct Online)

NHS health information site for England – covers all aspects of health, illness and treatments.

www.nhs24.com
(NHS 24 in Scotland)

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk
(NHS Direct Wales)

www.n-i.nhs.uk
(Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland)

www.nutrition.org.uk
(British Nutrition Foundation)

Contains information on healthy eating.

www.patient.co.uk

(Patient UK)

Provides good quality information about health and disease. Includes evidence-based information leaflets on a wide range of medical and health topics. Also reviews and links to many health- and illness-related websites.

www.riprap.org.uk

(Riprap)

Developed especially for teenagers who have a parent with cancer.

www.wcrf-uk.org

(World Cancer Research Fund)

An organisation committed to preventing cancer. It funds research and provides people with information about reducing their risk of cancer.

www.who.int

(World Health Organisation)

Has details of international dietary guidelines.

Questions you might like to ask your doctor, nurse or dietitian

You can fill this in before you see the doctor, nurse or dietitian and then use it to remind yourself of the questions you want to ask, and the answers you receive.

1. _____

Answer _____

2. _____

Answer _____

3. _____

Answer _____

4. _____

Answer _____

5. _____

Answer _____

6. _____

Answer _____

Notes

Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate, but it should not be relied upon to reflect the current state of medical research, which is constantly changing. If you are concerned about your health, you should consult a doctor. Macmillan cannot accept liability for any loss or damage resulting from any inaccuracy in this information or third-party information, such as information on websites to which we link. We feature real-life stories in all of our articles. Some photographs are of models.

Thanks

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Patient quote sourced from Healthtalkonline – www.healthtalkonline.org

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Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It's just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer. They're produced by our cancer information specialists who, along with our nurses, benefits advisers, campaigners and volunteers, are part of the Macmillan team. When people are facing the toughest fight of their lives, we're there to support them every step of the way.

We want to make sure no one has to go through cancer alone, so we need more people to help us. When the time is right for you, here are some ways in which you can become a part of our team.



Share your cancer experience

Support people living with cancer by telling your story, online, in the media or face to face.

Campaign for change

We need your help to make sure everyone gets the right support. Take an action, big or small, for better cancer care.

Help someone in your community

A lift to an appointment. Help with the shopping. Or just a cup of tea and a chat. Could you lend a hand?

Raise money

Whatever you like doing you can raise money to help. Take part in one of our events or create your own.

Give money

Big or small, every penny helps. To make a one-off donation see over.

Call us to find out more

0300 1000 200

macmillan.org.uk/getinvolved

Please fill in your personal details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other _____

Name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please accept my gift of £ _____

(Please delete as appropriate)

I enclose a cheque / postal order /
Charity Voucher made payable to
Macmillan Cancer Support

OR debit my:

Visa / MasterCard / CAF Charity
Card / Switch / Maestro

Card number

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Valid from

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Signature _____

Date / / _____

Don't let the taxman keep your money

Do you pay tax? If so, your gift will be worth 25% more to us – at no extra cost to you. All you have to do is tick the box below, and the tax office will give 25p for every pound you give.

- I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Macmillan Cancer Support to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make in the future, as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in each tax year, that is at least equal to the tax that Charities & CASCs I donate to will reclaim on my gifts. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify and that Macmillan Cancer Support will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Macmillan Cancer Support and our trading companies would like to hold your details in order to contact you about our fundraising, campaigning and services for people affected by cancer. If you would prefer us not to use your details in this way please tick this box.

In order to carry out our work we may need to pass your details to agents or partners who act on our behalf.



If you'd rather donate online go to macmillan.org.uk/donate

Please cut out this form and return it in an envelope (no stamp required) to:
Supporter Donations, Macmillan Cancer Support, FREEPOST LON15851,
89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ