

WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

A practical guide to living with and after cancer

COPING WITH HAIR LOSS





'I still have down days when I don't like the way it looks. But I am not ashamed of how I look. That's who I am.'

Sara, diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014

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About this booklet

This booklet gives information and practical tips to help both men and women cope with changes to their hair during and after cancer treatments.

Some people having cancer treatment find that it doesn't affect their hair at all. However, chemotherapy and other treatments can affect the condition and growth of your hair. Some people find their hair becomes thinner and in some people, it falls out completely. Any hair loss from chemotherapy is almost always temporary.

What is this booklet about?

This booklet:

- explains how cancer treatments may affect your hair
- gives advice on how to prepare for hair loss and what to expect
- discusses headwear such as hats, scarves and turbans
- explains how to get, pay for and look after a wig or hairpiece
- tells you what to expect after your treatment finishes.

Whether the booklet is for you, a family member or a friend, we hope it answers some of your questions and gives practical tips to help you cope with hair loss.

How to use this booklet

As hair loss affects people in different ways, you may find that only some sections of this booklet apply to you. We suggest you use the contents page to choose which chapters are relevant to you, so you can skip those that aren't.

Throughout the booklet we have included comments from people who have had hair loss, which you may find helpful. Some are from members of our Online Community ([macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)), while others are from Macmillan case studies.

We have also included quotes from our video about Bengu, who had hair loss following treatment for leukaemia. You can watch her video at [macmillan.org.uk/hairloss](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/hairloss)

Practical help



We've used this icon throughout the booklet to show practical tips.

A lot of help is available. You can ask your healthcare team whether there is anyone who can show you how to wear different types of headwear and give you ideas and tips. Some hospitals run hair and beauty programmes for people affected by cancer, such as Look Good Feel Better and HeadStrong (see pages 89–90).



You can also ask a professional hairdresser for advice. Macmillan has partnerships with TONI&GUY and with the national charity mynewhair, founded by hairdresser Trevor Sorbie. Both organisations provide access to experts in hair advice and wig styling for people affected by cancer (see page 28).

Further information

Turn to pages 18–19 for questions you may wish to ask your healthcare team before or during treatment and page 97 to write down any other notes or questions you want to ask.

Pages 89–96 have addresses and websites for organisations that may be useful to you.

If you'd like to discuss this information, call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. If you're hard of hearing you can use textphone **0808 808 0121**, or Text Relay. For non-English speakers, interpreters are available. Alternatively, visit **[macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)**





EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

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People's first question when they are told they have cancer is often 'Will I lose my hair?'. Our hair may be an important part of our appearance and identity. It may be a way we express our personality. Often, when our hair looks good, we feel good.

Many people find losing their hair upsetting. You may feel uncomfortable about socialising with your different appearance and worry about how it will affect relationships with family and friends. In some cultures, hair is seen as a symbol of fertility and desirability, or a sign of health and status. If hair has a special significance for your culture, it can be even more difficult to adjust to losing it.

This booklet has suggestions to help both men and women cope with losing their hair and managing their new appearance.

Our booklet *Body image and cancer* explains how cancer can affect your body and the way you see it. It suggests ways of dealing with those thoughts and feelings.

'Finding out that I was going to lose my hair was a really big deal to me. It was more upsetting that the cancer, because to me my hair was always my crowning glory.'

Bengu

Your feelings

People can have different feelings about losing their hair. Some people may feel low in confidence, anxious or depressed. Others may feel angry that their hair loss is a visible reminder of their cancer – for themselves and others.

Many people with hair loss feel vulnerable and exposed. Even more so if their eyebrows, eyelashes, beard or moustache and pubic hair fall out.

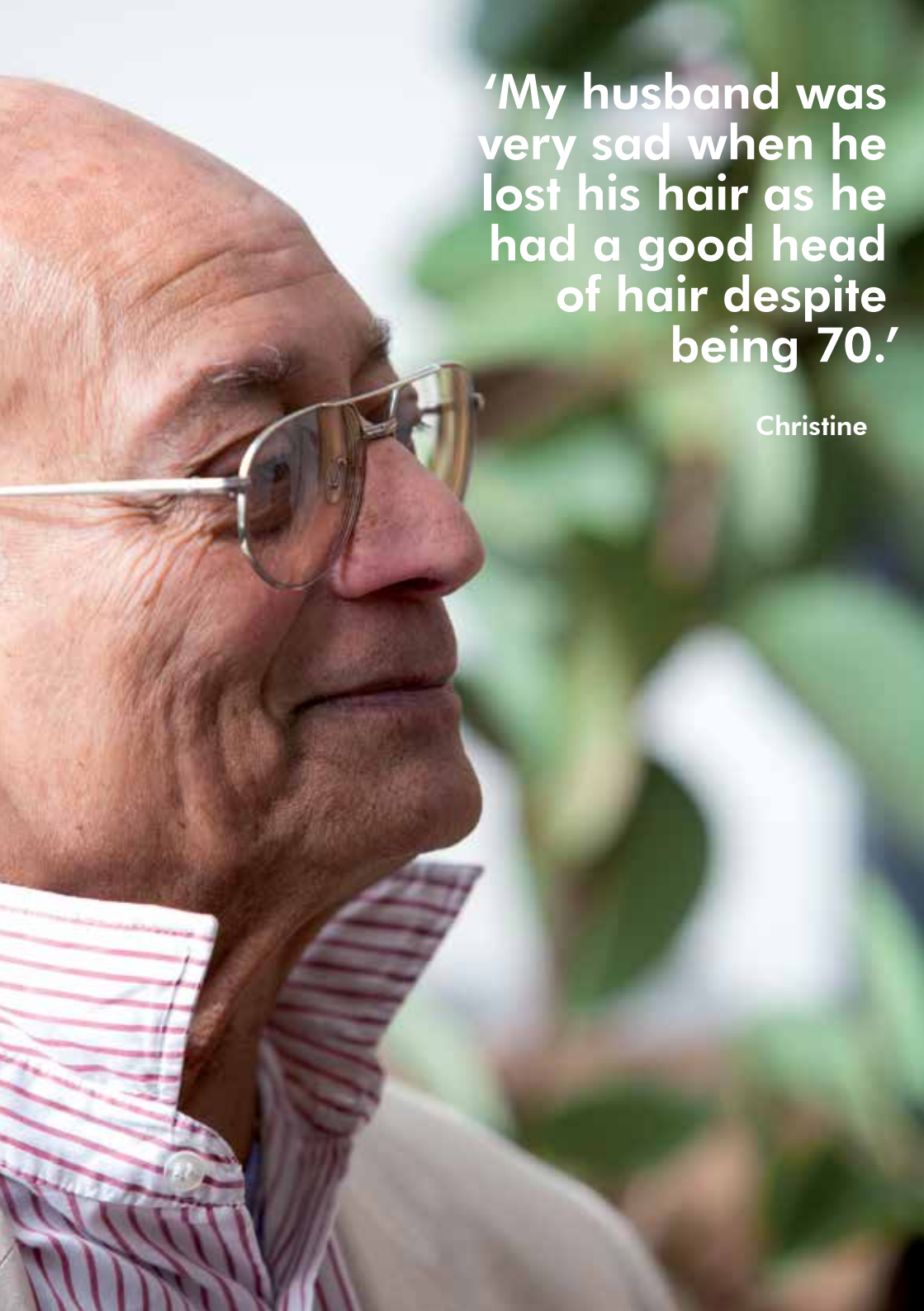
You may also feel you have to tell people about your cancer diagnosis when you do not want to. For some people, losing their hair is one of the hardest parts of having treatment and the final straw. For others, it isn't as bad as they expected.

All these different feelings are completely normal. Our booklet *How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer* discusses ways to manage difficult feelings.

Other people's reactions

Today, cancer is much more talked about than a few years ago. People are more aware of the effects of cancer treatment on hair. It is more openly discussed and accepted. But sometimes family and friends may be upset by your hair loss and find it hard not to show this. This can be difficult for you to deal with. Try to remember they are usually concerned for you and may not know how to react.

Only you can decide whether to tell people you have cancer. But you shouldn't feel under pressure to tell people you don't want to.



'My husband was very sad when he lost his hair as he had a good head of hair despite being 70.'

Christine

Talk about it

Most people find that their family and friends are very supportive, and that it can help to talk through their feelings about losing their hair. But it may take a while for you to come to terms with your hair loss, to talk with others and deal with their reactions.

At the hospital, you'll probably meet other people who've had hair loss, who can give advice and tips on how they've coped. You can also meet people at cancer support groups. We can give you details of support groups in your area.

Some people find it easier to talk to someone they don't know. You can talk to our cancer support specialists on **0808 808 00 00** if you're finding it hard to cope with hair loss or other aspects of your cancer and its treatment. They can also give you information about counselling and how to contact a counsellor in your area.

You can also visit our Online Community at **macmillan.org.uk/community** There you can chat with other people who have hair loss, or just read through the posts or blogs other people have written.



Our booklet *Talking about your cancer* has practical advice on how to talk to people close to you.



CANCER TREATMENTS AND HAIR LOSS

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Our hair grows from indentations in the skin called follicles. There are over 100,000 hairs on the average head and they each have a continual growing, resting and falling cycle. When we are healthy, about 90% of our hair is in the growing phase.

Cancer treatments can affect your hair's normal phases of hair growth. Some treatments may make your hair fall out completely. This may be from your head and other parts of your body. This is usually temporary. Other treatments can cause permanent hair loss in specific areas of your body. Sometimes, complete hair loss may not happen, but your hair can become thinner and more brittle.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy uses anti-cancer drugs to destroy cancer cells. The drugs work by attacking the cancer cells and disrupting their growth. Unfortunately, they can also affect the normal cells in the body, including the cells of the hair follicles. This disrupts the natural hair growth cycle and causes hair loss, known as chemotherapy induced alopecia (CIA). Unlike cancer cells, however, the normal cells quickly recover. This means that if you lose your hair due to chemotherapy, it will almost always grow back when your treatment is over.

Many people assume that they will lose their hair if they have chemotherapy. This isn't always true. Many chemotherapy drugs can cause hair loss. But some chemotherapy treatments never cause hair loss. The hair loss may vary from mild shedding that is hardly noticeable, to complete hair loss.

The amount of hair that falls out depends on the drug or combination of drugs used, the doses given and the way your body reacts to the drug. New chemotherapy treatments are being trialled all the time so it is not always possible to predict whether someone will lose their hair.

Some chemotherapy drugs make other body hair fall out, such as eyebrows, eyelashes, nasal hair, beard, moustache, chest, underarm, leg and pubic hair. Again, this is almost always temporary. We have some practical tips on pages 40–43 to help you cope with this hair loss.

A process called scalp cooling can prevent hair loss in some people. See pages 30–31 for more information.

Before you start chemotherapy, your doctor or chemotherapy nurse will discuss with you how likely hair loss is and other side effects. See pages 18–19 for questions to ask your healthcare team.

'My hair started falling out soon after my first chemo. It's actually not been too bad, I have lots of pretty scarves and a couple of turbans that are easy to put on and available online or through the hospital. It takes a while to get used to but is worth it. Some of the chemo problems are hard to deal with, but the hair thing is not so bad and it will grow back.'

Sha

Will my hair grow back after chemotherapy?

Whether you have partial or complete hair loss, your hair will nearly always grow back in full. Very rarely, after high doses of chemotherapy, not all of the hair grows back. Very occasionally, some follicles will not make a new replacement hair. This can make your hair permanently thinner – but this is rare.

Your hair may even begin to grow back before you finish your treatment. See pages 79–81 for information on caring for your hair as it grows back.



Radiotherapy

There are a number of types of radiotherapy. External radiotherapy treats cancer by using high-energy rays that destroy the cancer cells, while doing as little harm as possible to normal cells. This only causes hair loss in the area being treated. For example, if you have external radiotherapy to your head, you'll probably lose some hair from your scalp in the area where the radiotherapy beam goes into and out of your scalp. If you're having treatment for breast cancer, and the radiotherapy includes your armpit, the hair under your arm is likely to fall out.

Whether you will have hair loss depends on a number of things, including the dose and number of treatments. You can ask the radiotherapy staff how likely you are to have hair loss and to show you exactly where your hair will fall out.

Will my hair grow back after external radiotherapy?

Hair loss following external radiotherapy is sometimes permanent. Other people find the hair that grows back is patchy. Your doctor or radiographer will discuss the possibility of permanent hair loss and other side effects with you before you start your treatment.

If you have hair loss on your head, you may want to wear a hairpiece, wig or some other type of headwear (see pages 46–53). It may also be possible to have a hair transplant (see page 54). However, this is a specialised treatment that isn't available on the NHS. If you are considering a hair transplant, contact the Institute of Trichologists for a list of qualified surgeons. This option is not suitable for everyone.

Surgery

If you are having surgery in an area of the body that has hair, such as an operation for a brain tumour, an area of the head will be shaved. This is usually a small area of hair and it will grow back after the operation.

Other treatments

Other types of cancer treatment, including hormonal or biological therapies, can sometimes make your hair thinner or dry and brittle. Your doctor, specialist nurse or our cancer support specialists can let you know whether your treatment is likely to affect your hair. See pages 37–38 for tips on how to care for dry and brittle hair during treatment.



We can send you free booklets with detailed information about chemotherapy, radiotherapy and other cancer treatments. These include more information about possible side effects.

Questions to ask your healthcare team

Not all cancer treatments affect hair in the same way. It can help to know what changes to expect and how to prepare yourself. Here are some questions you may like to ask your doctor or nurse:

- Is it likely the treatment I'm having will cause hair loss?
- Will I have complete hair loss, patchy hair loss or thinning?
- How long after starting my treatment is hair loss likely to happen? How quickly will it fall out?

- Will I lose hair from other parts of my body? For example, my eyelashes, eyebrows, facial hair or pubic hair?
- Is there anything I can do to prevent hair loss?
- Will my hair grow back after the treatment has finished?
- How long after treatment can I expect my hair to grow back?
- Can I get financial help to buy a wig or hair piece? (See pages 66–68.)
- Can you recommend headwear suppliers or support groups?

If you're having chemotherapy

- Is scalp cooling (see pages 30–31) an option for me to help prevent hair loss?
- How likely is it that scalp cooling will work?

If you're having radiotherapy

- Can you tell me the size and location of the treatment area and the expected hair loss? You can also ask for a diagram.

**'I lost all my hair
but it was ok. Wigs
were fun but I
decided to just be
myself and be bald.
Everyone was fine.'**

Trudi



PREPARING FOR HAIR LOSS

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It can be distressing to be told you will, or are likely to, lose your hair. Hair loss is most likely to happen when you are having chemotherapy, but it doesn't happen with all chemotherapy treatments (see pages 14–16).

Eating well

Eating a well-balanced diet before treatment starts may help your body cope better with the effects of the cancer treatment in all areas of the body, including the hair. It is especially important that you get enough protein and energy to maintain your weight.



We have a range of booklets on diet and cancer, including *Healthy eating and cancer* and *Eating problems and cancer*. Call us on 0808 808 00 00 to order free copies.

What you can do to prepare for hair loss

There are some things you can do to help you feel more in control when your hair starts to fall out.

Talk to friends and family

Other people's reactions to your hair loss can sometimes be difficult to cope with. They may feel uncomfortable and not know what to say. It can help for you to raise the subject first. Once they hear you talking about it, they'll probably be able to offer you more help and support. For example, they may be able to help you choose a wig or hairpiece that suits you, or help in other ways.

People often worry that their children will be scared if they see them without their hair, but children usually cope well when they're told about any changes to your appearance in advance.



We have booklets called *Talking about your cancer*, and *Talking to children and teenagers when an adult has cancer*. We can send you these booklets for free.

Find a hair loss support group

You may find it helpful to talk to other people with hair loss. You can talk to people who are going through the same thing and exchange tips on how to cope. Ask your doctor or nurse for support groups in your local area. Pages 89–96 also have a list of organisations which can support you. Support is also available on Macmillan's Online Community at **community.macmillan.org.uk**

Buy a wig before treatment starts

You may feel that everyone will notice when you're wearing a wig. But it's very common for people to completely change their hair colour and style. Often people may not realise you are wearing a wig.

If you decide you would like to wear a wig, it is a good idea to buy one before you start treatment. It will be easier to match the wig to your own hair colour and style. You can get used to wearing the wig before your hair starts to fall out. It will also be ready in case your hair loss happens earlier or quicker than you expect. See pages 63–69 for information on choosing and buying a wig.

'I went to the hairdressers and had one whole side of my hair shaved. Then I had a mohawk after that. I was taking control of the situation and it felt really good.'

Sara



Buy a hat or other headwear

You may need something to keep your head warm and protect it when you are not wearing a wig. Your scalp will be more sensitive to cold, windy or sunny weather. Even at home your head may feel very cold if you have been used to having a full head of hair. Some people find they prefer wearing a hat or other headwear instead of a wig. See pages 46–57 for headwear options.

Consider cutting your hair short

Many people prepare themselves for losing their hair by cutting it short. Losing smaller clumps of hair can be less emotional than longer clumps. Hair often comes out in uneven patches. This can be less noticeable on shorter hair. It can also give your friends and family the chance to get used to seeing you with shorter hair.

Some people prefer to shave their heads completely before they start losing their hair. This can give a sense of control over what is going to happen and you may prefer to do this, rather than wait for your hair to fall out. If you want to remove all your hair, use clippers. Shaving with a blade or razor can lead to cuts and infections.

See the next page for tips on cutting or clipping your hair short.



Practical tips for cutting your hair short

- Cut your hair in stages to give you time to get used to a new length.
- If you decide to cut your hair yourself, remove the length of your hair with scissors first. Then use a set of clippers with a cutting guard/attachment on them. Try to get a friend or family member to help.
- Leave a very short layer of hair. Don't shave your head with a blade as this can lead to cuts and infection.
- It is easier to use clippers on clean, dry hair with no products in it.
- If you want a hairdresser to cut your hair, there are salons that specialise in styling people affected by cancer.

Macmillan is working in partnerships with TONI&GUY and with the national charity mynewhair to provide specialist hair care for people affected by cancer.

TONI&GUY's Strength in Style Consultants have been specially trained in the effects of cancer treatment on hair. They can help clients deal with hair loss, fitting and adjusting wigs and re-growth. See page 91 for contact details.

mynewhair is a charity founded by hairdresser Trevor Sorbie. It trains a national network of independent salon professionals to support clients through their hair loss. They can offer support from diagnosis through to aftercare, including a wig personalisation service. See page 90 for contact details.

Some people may not want to cut their hair for cultural or religious reasons, and may find other headwear helpful. See pages 46–54 for more information.

Find a way to cope with loss of eyebrows and eyelashes

It may be a good plan to buy products you think you will need and learn how to use them. See pages 40–43 for information on losing your eyebrows and eyelashes.

'After my fourth chemotherapy session, my hair was starting to grow back, and that's when my eyebrows and eyelashes decided to do a disappearing act. Luckily with the clever use of make-up, this wasn't too noticeable.'

Sharon



PREVENTING HAIR LOSS

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Some people find scalp cooling helps to prevent hair loss from chemotherapy. There is no known way to prevent hair loss from radiotherapy, hormonal therapies or biological therapies.

Scalp cooling

By cooling the scalp during chemotherapy, it's sometimes possible to reduce the amount of chemotherapy that reaches the hair follicles on your scalp. This reduces and, in some cases, it can prevent the hair from falling out.

There are two widely available methods for scalp cooling.

Cold cap

This method uses a special cap that is filled with cold gel. It can be fitted easily and kept in place with Velcro®. The cap can often be uncomfortable and heavy, as well as being very cold. This can give some people a headache. It also needs to be changed every 20–40 minutes to keep your scalp cool. There is a photo of a man wearing a cold cap on page 28.

'The cold cap is a bit of a guessing game. Some use it for every session but still lose hair, some get very good results from the cold cap with minimal loss.'

George and Jackie

Refrigerated cooling system

The other type of scalp cooling uses a refrigerated cooling system that pumps liquid coolant through a cap. This type of cap generally feels lighter than a gel-filled cap. You need to sit next to the machine while the cap is in place, so you can't walk about freely. However, the cap can be disconnected for short periods if necessary, for example if you need to use the toilet.

Things to consider

Both types of scalp cooling need to be worn for up to 30–40 minutes before your chemotherapy drugs are given and for some time afterwards. You may have the cap on for a few hours in total. You may feel cold during the treatment. The chemotherapy staff will do all they can to make you as comfortable as possible, but some people find the discomfort too much.

Scalp cooling is only effective when used with certain chemotherapy drugs and it's not always possible to know how effective the treatment will be until you try it. Scalp cooling is not advised when treating some types of cancer.

Some hospitals don't have facilities for scalp cooling. Your doctor or chemotherapy nurse can tell you if it's available and if it's suitable for you.

We can send you more detailed information about scalp cooling.

If you have hair thinning

Some people find they do not lose all their hair. It may thin or become very dry and brittle instead. If this happens, it is important to treat your hair carefully. This may prevent damage to your hair and may help to reduce any further hair loss. See pages 37–38 for tips on caring for your hair during treatment.



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Hair loss after cancer treatment is usually due to chemotherapy, but it may also happen after other treatments. See pages 14–19 for information on cancer treatments and hair loss.

Chemotherapy

If your hair is going to fall out from chemotherapy, it usually starts 2–3 weeks after your first session. Sometimes it can start within a few days but this is rare. The first thing you may notice is hair on your pillow in the morning. You may also see more hair coming out when you brush, comb or wash it. See below for advice about looking after your hair during this time.

Some people only lose some of their hair. The remaining hair will appear thinner. For other people, their hair may carry on falling out over several weeks until they become bald. Sometimes, the hair comes out very quickly over 1–2 days, which can be very upsetting.

You may find that your scalp feels tender. See pages 39–40 for tips on looking after your skin.

Your hair loss will continue throughout your treatment and for a few weeks afterward. Whether your hair thins or you become completely bald will depend on your treatment.

Some people do not have hair loss, but chemotherapy can cause the hair to become dry, fragile and break easily. If this happens to your hair, be careful with your usual hairdressing routine to help reduce damage. See pages 37–38 for tips on caring for your hair during treatment.

Radiotherapy

Whether you have hair loss from radiotherapy will depend on the strength of the dose and the number of treatments you have. It will only cause hair loss in the treatment area. Hair loss can happen where the radiation beam leaves the body (for example, on the back of the neck), as well as where it enters the body. Ask your cancer specialist or radiographer to show you exactly where your hair will fall out.

Hair usually begins to fall out after 2–3 weeks. It takes about a week for the hair in the treatment area to fall out completely. Hair can start to grow back after treatment finishes. This may take several months, although it depends on the dose of radiotherapy you have.

Sometimes, when the dose is high, hair loss is permanent. Your radiographer can tell you if this is likely.

If you have permanent hair loss on your head, you may want to wear a hair piece, wig or some other type of headwear. It may also be possible to have a hair transplant. See pages 46–57 for more information on the options available. Hair transplants are only suitable for some people. You should contact the Institute of Trichologists for a members list of qualified cosmetic surgeons. See page 90 for contact details.

Hormonal and biological therapies

Some people notice their hair becomes thinner while taking a hormonal or biological therapy. This is usually mild and the hair grows back at the end of treatment. Men may notice they have less beard growth. You may also notice your head and body hair is finer, curlier or more brittle. Each therapy has different possible side effects. Ask your doctor if you are likely to experience changes to your hair.





Practical tips to care for your hair

These tips are suitable for all hair types. They are especially important for Afro-Caribbean hair – all curly hair is naturally more susceptible to damage.

If your hair is dry or brittle during or after your cancer treatment, try to:

- Wash your hair at least once every two days. Leaving longer between washes will not prevent hair loss. It may cause problems as hair loss can build up on your head and tangle.
- Only use gentle hair products and non-medicated shampoo.
- If you're having radiotherapy to your head, check with the radiotherapy staff whether you can use shampoo on your hair and if so, which type of shampoo.
- When washing your hair, only apply conditioner to the middle lengths and ends of the hair in small sections. Only apply conditioner if your hair is long enough.
- When towel drying hair, blot your hair with the towel instead of rubbing it too hard.
- Your hair will damage more when it is wet, so use a wide-toothed comb – combs cause less damage than brushes. Start combing from the ends to reduce tangles.
- Try to use brushes that have wide spaced prongs. Full-bristle brushes will snag and pull on the hair.

- Avoid using too much heat from hairdryers or heated rollers – this can dry the hair and make it break. Put hairdryers on a low heat and hold at least 15cm away from the hair.
- Avoid using hair straighteners during treatment as these may cause a lot of damage to fragile hair.
- Try to leave your hair a little damp – moisture is important for our hair's health.
- Avoid wearing your hair in a tight band, as this can damage and break it. If you plait your hair, plait it gently.
- Avoid perming, colouring or chemically relaxing your hair as this can make it even more dry and brittle. See pages 80–81 for tips on colouring, perming or relaxing your hair after treatment has finished.
- At night, wear a soft cap or turban around your head to stop your hair becoming tangled and to collect any loose hair – women may find it easier to wear a hairnet.
- Try to eat a well-balanced diet including protein and energy.



Practical tips to care for your skin

If your hair falls out, it's important to take care of the skin on your head and other places where you had hair. It may be more sensitive than skin elsewhere and can feel very tender.

- If you are having radiotherapy, you should avoid using any deodorants, soaps, perfumes and lotions on your skin other than those advised by the radiographers. If you develop a skin reaction, such as soreness or a change in skin colour, let the radiotherapy staff know as soon as possible. They will advise you on the best way to manage it.
- Shampoo your scalp every day – even if you have lost all your hair. Scalp tissue still contains oil and sweat glands. This is especially important if you are wearing a wig. Use a perfume-free product.
- Use a gentle unperfumed moisturiser on your scalp if it gets dry, flaky or itchy.
- Use pillowcases made of 100% natural fibres, such as cotton or linen, as man-made fibres like nylon and polyester can irritate the scalp.
- Cover your head with a hat to make sure your skin doesn't get burnt on sunny days. If you don't want to cover your head, use a suncream with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 on your scalp whenever you go out.
- Cover your head when it is cold to protect your scalp and to prevent heat loss.

- Avoid using perfumed deodorants if you have lost hair under your arms. Baby powder or deodorants made from natural mineral crystals can be used instead – these are available from chemists or health shops.
- If you have chosen to wear a wig, leave it off whenever possible to let your scalp breathe.

Eyebrows, eyelashes, facial hair and pubic hair

Losing your eyebrows and eyelashes can really change your appearance. However, you can learn to create new eyebrows with an eyebrow pencil if you wish, or you can use false eyebrows and eyelashes.

Eyebrows

If you lose your eyebrows or find that they are thinner, you can redraw them with an eyebrow pencil that matches your normal hair colour. Eyebrow pencils are available from any chemist or beauty shop. Beauty counters in department stores can show you how to redraw your eyebrows, as it can be daunting to try this at first if you're not used to it.

'One thing I didn't like was getting up in the middle of the night and catching a sight of myself in the mirror, because it catches you unawares. In the morning I would always apply some eyebrows at least straight away.'

Adele

To make the eyebrows as realistic and natural-looking as possible, follow the natural eyebrow arch and draw in short, feathery strokes that look like the normal eyebrow hair.

Make the brow thicker on the inner end of the eyebrow (nearest to the nose) and thinner at the outer edge.

Another natural-looking way to redraw the eyebrows is by using an eye shadow powder and applying it with a make-up brush. You can also use false eyebrows. These are available from some of the organisations listed on pages 89–90. They need to be fixed with special adhesive, which is available from false eyebrow suppliers. Special solvent is used to dissolve the adhesive and remove the eyebrows.



Men may find that drawing eyebrows with an eyebrow pencil is not suitable for them. Some men find that wearing a pair of thick-rimmed glasses helps to add character to their face and hides the missing eyebrows.

Some people choose to have permanent tattooing to create new eyebrows. This can be done by some cosmetic salons, medical tattoo specialists and tattooing shops. It should only be carried out by tattooists registered with their local authority who hold an up-to-date health and safety certificate.

Eyelashes

False eyelashes can be used to give a natural appearance. These are available from many beauty departments along with the adhesive that's used to attach them. Many department stores have private rooms where staff can show you how to apply the eyelashes. Wearing glasses can be another good option for men and women.



Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors have volunteered to be specially trained by Macmillan to help women manage the visible side-effects of cancer. Visit [boots.com/storelocator](https://www.boots.com/storelocator) to find your nearest Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor.

We also have a selection of videos that give practical tips on eyebrows, eyelashes and skin care. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/BootsMacmillanBeautyAdvisers](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/BootsMacmillanBeautyAdvisers)

Moustaches and beards

Losing a moustache or a beard can be very difficult to deal with. Facial hair can be an important part of a man's identity. Some make-up shops or theatrical shops sell moustaches or beards. Some of these can be tailored specially, but this can be very expensive.

Pubic hair

Some people temporarily lose their pubic hair. This can be upsetting and you may worry about how you look. If you have a partner, you may also be concerned about what they think and worry that it could affect your sex life. Try to be open with your partner and talk about how you feel. Often by talking you'll find that it's not such a problem after all.

Nasal hair

If you lose the hair from inside your nose, you may be more likely to have a runny nose. Although this can be irritating, it's only temporary and will stop when the hairs grow back. Try to take plenty of tissues with you when you go out.



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There are several practical ways to cope with hair loss. They don't make the problem disappear, but can make life a bit easier for you during this difficult time. This is a personal choice for you to make.

Some hospitals have staff who can show you how to wear different types of headwear and give you ideas and tips.

You can ask your nurses whether there is anyone who can do this for you. You could also ask a professional hairdresser for advice.

Some hospitals run hair and beauty programmes for people affected by cancer. Your nurses should be able to tell you if your hospital has such a programme, or if not, whether there is one at another nearby hospital.



Most of these programmes are for women, but Look Good Feel Better USA has a website for men affected by cancer. It includes practical tips on coping with hair loss. Visit lookgoodfeelbetterformen.org

Wigs

Many people choose to wear a wig as they want to appear as normal as possible. You may not want people other than close family and friends to know you have cancer. Wearing a wig allows you to continue with a style you are familiar with. Alternatively, it gives you the chance to try out different styles. If you have only partial hair loss, there are also half wigs and three-quarter wigs that may be suitable for you. See pages 60–73 for information on how to choose and wear a wig.

Hats

Hats are a popular option for both men and women and come in hundreds of different shapes, styles and colours. They are common fashion accessories and are both practical – keeping your head warm – and attractive.

Department stores usually have a good selection and there are also specialist hat shops. Try on a range of different styles and you'll probably find one that suits you and feels comfortable.

Scarves and bandanas

Scarves are another option. They are available in a wide variety of colours and materials, and are light and easy to wear. Cotton, lightweight wool or blends are the best fabrics to use – satin-type materials tend to slide off the head too easily. Scarves from the suppliers listed on pages 95–96 usually have instructions and suggestions on how to tie them. You may like to try the basic style described on the next couple of pages.

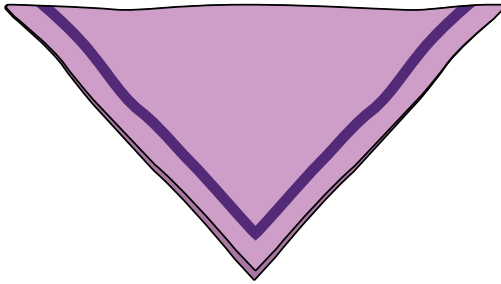
'I got my husband to cut my hair, then shave it off. It was quite liberating for me and I have since enjoyed playing around with scarves and have bought some trendy hats and skull caps. I have had lots of positive feedback from friends.'

Rowann

How to tie a basic headwrap

For a basic headwrap, you will need a scarf at least 75cm x 75cm (29.5in x 29.5in). For more elaborate styles, it needs to be 100cm x 100cm (39in x 39in).

1 Lay a square scarf flat, wrong side facing you. Fold the scarf diagonally into a triangle.



2 Place the scarf on your head with the folded edge about 2.5cm (1in) below your natural hairline and the point at the back.



3 Tie the ends into a double knot behind your head and over the triangle point (if you're doing more than the basic headwrap you may only need a single knot). The flap should be underneath the knot.



4 Pull any excess scarf out from under the knot.



For variation, you can try the following:

- Wear the ends of the scarf loose – particularly if it's sunny or you are going to wear a hat on top.
- Tie the ends of the scarf in a bow or gather all the ends in an elasticated ponytail band to help make loops and tails to form a bow. This can also look nice under a hat.
- Twist the three ends together to look like a twisted rope and wrap them tightly around the knot like a bun, then secure the loose ends by tucking them through the centre of the bun.
- For a different twist, pull all three ends together and tuck them securely over and under the knot to look like a French hair roll.
- Twist the long ends separately, bring them forward and tie them at the front of your head, then continue twisting and tucking the ends in around your head. At the back, twist the short end and tuck it in. You can vary this by twisting in coloured cord, beads or a contrasting scarf to match what you are wearing. You may find it helps to twist one end at a time and secure it with a hair grip, paperclip or elastic band while you twist the other one.



How to tie a bandana

For a simple bandana fold, you will need a bandana at least 56cm x 56cm (22in x 22in). Some people prefer a larger size.

- Lay your bandana flat, with the wrong side facing you. Fold the scarf diagonally into a triangle.
- Place the bandana on your head with the folded edge about 2.5cm (1in) above your normal brow line and the sides of the bandana above the ears. The point will be at the back.
- Tie the two ends of the bandana behind your head twice so it does not come undone.
- Tuck the point under the knot so it doesn't stick out.



Turbans

Turbans are available in a range of materials such as velvet, silk, cotton and towelling. They are popular and comfortable to wear, especially in hot weather. They are available at some chemists, department stores or specialist wig shops, and from some of the suppliers listed on pages 95–96.

Hair accessories and replacements

If you normally have a fringe, you can get one on a Velcro® band from some wig suppliers. Some suppliers also make turbans and scarves with optional fringes or headbands with hair attached.

Hats, headbands or bandanas with attached hair can be ordered from some of the organisations listed on pages 91–96.

Hair pieces and clip-in hair can be used to thicken thin hair or to cover up small areas of hair loss, for example from radiotherapy. They are only suitable for you if you have some hair remaining. They may be attached using glues, clips or double-sided tape.

Extensions, weaves and any plaiting or bonding systems should be avoided as this will put extra tension on the remaining hair. This will disrupt the natural hair growth and could cause more hair loss.

Any hair pieces and clips should be removed before sleeping to avoid damage to your natural hair.

Change in hair style

If you have not lost all your hair, you may find that a change in hairstyle helps to cover up the hair loss. There are specialist hairdressers who can advise on a change of style which is most suitable for your situation. See pages 90–91 for details of TONI&GUY's Strength in Style Consultants or the mynewhair charity. Working in partnership with Macmillan, they provide access to salon professionals who are specially trained in the effects of cancer treatment on hair and can advise on hair loss, wigs and re-growth.

Hair transplants

Surgery to replace hair is only suitable if you have permanent hair loss, for example after radiotherapy. A hair transplant surgeon will take hair from a part of your head to cover the area of hair loss. The surgeon will test a small area first, to see if the hair takes well. Hair transplant techniques have greatly improved over recent years and the result can be very natural looking hair. However, this procedure is not suitable for everyone and it is important that you consult a specialist surgeon if you are considering this option. Contact the Institute of Trichologists for a members list of qualified cosmetic surgeons (see page 90 for the contact details).

Proud to be bald

Although we have discussed various types of headwear, you may prefer not to wear anything on your head. Some people find ways to express their individual style in other ways through accessories. It's important to do what feels right for you.

See page 57 for tips on how to create a new focus with your appearance.



Children and teenagers

Many children aren't worried by their hair loss and may be proud of their bald heads. However, if they do want to cover up, there are wigs available for children. There are also hats, caps, scarves or bandanas that they can wear. If a child needs treatment from time to time over a few years, they will probably need a new wig each time while their head is still growing.

If you're a teenager, having a change in your appearance can be very upsetting. There are many natural-looking wigs and other ways to cover hair loss. If you'd like to speak to other teenagers with cancer, you can contact the Teenage Cancer Trust. It also offers young people with cancer the opportunity to choose a free human-hair wig and have it styled at a salon. See page 90 for contact details.

There are also websites for teenagers with cancer. Some of these have chat rooms where you can talk about your feelings with other teenagers.



We can send you a booklet called *The cancer guide for young people*. It is aimed at people aged 12–25 who are living with cancer.



Practical tips to draw attention away from your hair loss

You may find it difficult if it feels like your wig or other headwear is the first thing people look at or comment on. But there are things you can do that may help draw people's attention away from your hair loss.

- Wear brightly coloured shirts, sweaters, tops, ties or neck scarves to draw attention away from your hair loss.
- Try wearing a little extra make-up around your eyes, cheekbones or lips to direct attention to your face.
- Wear glasses – this can be very helpful if you have lost your eyebrows and eyelashes.
- Wear jewellery – necklaces and chains emphasise your neckline, while earrings look good with hats and scarves.

Some hospitals and support groups run programmes such as Look Good Feel Better or HeadStrong (see pages 89–90) that give expert advice on make-up and skincare (usually for women). Your nurses can let you know if there is a programme like this in your hospital or at a nearby support group.

At first, you may feel reluctant to go out and carry on with your social life. But hopefully, as you spend more time with other people, your confidence will grow and help you cope with the situation.



WIGS

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One practical way of coping with hair loss is to wear a wig or hairpiece. There are many different styles and colours to choose from, and they are very natural-looking and comfortable to wear.

Choosing a wig before your hair falls out means you can match the style and colour to your own hair and get used to wearing it. You will also have a wig ready in case your hair falls out faster than you expected. There is much less choice for men as it is difficult to make a man's short hair wig look natural around the hairline. Slightly longer hair styles can work better.

Benefits of wearing a wig

- You look and feel more like yourself.
- You only need to tell close friends and family if you want to.
- You can experiment with different colours and styles.
- You are more in control of how you look.
- It may help you to feel more confident.
- Synthetic wigs require very little styling each morning (human hair wigs can take the same time or longer – see opposite page).

Types of wigs

Wigs can be made of human or synthetic hair.

Human hair wigs

These may be made from different hair types, which are often bleached and then dyed. Asian hair is sometimes used to make wigs for Caucasian hair. To do this, it is stripped of its protecting cuticle as the hair strands are thicker than Caucasian hair. This can cause the hair to become very brittle.

- Human hair wigs can cost from a few hundred to a few thousand pounds and are not usually available on the NHS.
- They may need regular dry cleaning, setting and blow-drying by a professional, which can also be expensive.
- Some human hair wigs can be shampooed and styled at home on a specially designed wig head block – your wig maker can advise you about this.
- It can help to have two wigs so that you can wear one while the other is being cleaned.



Due to the high demand for real hair, human hair can be mixed with synthetic hair. The synthetic hairs will stretch and frizz when a hairdryer or hair straighteners are used. Check this with your hair supplier.

Synthetic wigs

Synthetic wigs used to have a bad reputation as they looked glossy. But they have improved a lot over the last few years.

- They are cheaper than real hair wigs, and are light and easier to look after. They can cost anything from fifty to several hundred pounds, but may be free on the NHS (see pages 66–67).
- The style is heat-sealed into the hair so that they can be hand-washed with shampoo, left to drip-dry overnight and are then ready to wear. They can be combed or brushed through gently.
- They usually last for around 4–8 months.
- Hair spray can be used if necessary, but try to avoid using too much as this can make the hair look dull and less natural.
- All wigs come with instructions on how to look after them and you should follow these carefully.

Using your own hair

Many people wonder whether they can have their own hair cut off and made into a wig. This may only be possible if your natural hair is long and in good condition. Even if that is the case, you may not have enough hair to make a full wig – it can sometimes take several heads of hair to make a wig. This is a specialised technique, so it will be expensive (£2,500 upwards) and will usually take at least ten weeks to be made.

Choosing a wig

The nurses on the ward can arrange for you to see a wig fitter or suggest organisations for you to use. See pages 91–95 for a list of wig makers. It's a good idea to take a relative or friend with you to help you make the decision.

Some people like to choose their wig before their hair falls out so they can match the style and colour to their own hair. The advantage of this is that if you lose your hair more quickly than expected, you will already be prepared. It also gives you a chance to get used to the wig before you really need it.

'Before I lost my hair I decided to wear my wig just to get used to wearing it. And it was a really good thing that I did because I didn't feel like somebody wearing a wig, I felt like somebody having fun.'

Bengu

If your hair hasn't fallen out yet, the wig should be quite tight so that it gives a good fit later on. Some wigs adjust to any head size.

There is no pressure on you to choose a wig straight away. You can leave the decision until you feel ready. If you have a hairdresser you trust, you may find it useful to speak to them first.

Most hospitals will supply wigs to people having treatment as outpatients, but this doesn't happen in all hospitals. If they don't supply a wig, they should be able to tell you how to get one fitted.



Practical tips for choosing a wig to match your current style

- Choose the same volume of hair as you had before. Too much hair can make it look obvious that you're wearing a wig. If in doubt, choose a wig with slightly less hair than you had before. Remember that the wig can be cut and styled by a hairdresser or the wig consultant.
- Choose your own colour or one shade lighter. If the hair is darker than your natural colour, it can look strange to your family and friends. Changing to a lighter colour is usually less noticeable.
- Remember when choosing a wig or hairpiece that, as your hair falls out, you will need a smaller size. Try to get a wig that adjusts to any head size.
- If you have a good hairdresser, they could help you choose your wig or hairpiece and, if necessary, cut and style it. Wig specialists may also be able to cut and style a wig when you have it fitted. It is best to choose a hairdresser who is specially trained to cut wigs.
- Take someone who will give you an honest opinion on the wig.
- If you have any questions about your wig or how to look after it, check with the wig fitter, manufacturer or your hairdresser.

Another approach is to treat this as a chance to try a completely different style or colour, to have a little fun and to surprise your family, friends and colleagues. Wigs are available in various colours and styles if you like the idea of being adventurous.



Fitting your wig

This can be an emotional time as you're forced to face up to the reality of losing your hair. The wig specialists will understand your feelings and will do all they can to make you feel comfortable and at ease during your fitting.

If all your hair has fallen out and the wig is slipping, you can get sticky pads to hold it in place. Some pads are hypoallergenic, which means they are less likely to cause a skin reaction. These can be helpful if your skin is sensitive due to chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

Paying for a wig

In the NHS and Health Service

NHS wigs are free for everyone in Wales. There are special arrangements for patients who are registered with GPs in Wales but have treatment in England.

Some hospitals in England and Scotland may cover the cost of wigs for outpatients receiving chemotherapy. Speak to your healthcare team for more information.

You can also qualify for a free NHS wig if:

- you're under 16, or under 19 and in full-time education
- you receive a valid war pension and need the items for your war disability
- you're a hospital inpatient when the wig is supplied
- your weekly income is low enough

- you're included in an award of: Income Support; the guarantee element of Pension Credit; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; income-related Employment and Support Allowance; Universal Credit; or are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax exemption certificate.

If you're entitled to a free wig, you'll need to tell the person who fits it that you can get it free of charge. You will need to show proof that you qualify, for example the letter showing which benefits you receive.

If you don't qualify for a free wig, you may be able to reclaim the VAT on these items. Contact HMRC on **0845 302 0203** or visit **[hmrc.gov.uk/vat](https://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat)**

Applying for an NHS wig

To apply for a free wig or partial help towards the cost of a wig, you will need to complete an HC1 form. This is available from your local Jobcentre or the staff at the hospital. You can also request a form by phoning the Health Cost advice line on **0845 850 1166**. Your income will be assessed, and if you are entitled to help, you will either be sent an HC2 full help certificate or HC3 partial help certificate.

There are no nationally set limits on the number of wigs a person can have from the NHS. However, local NHS organisations (individual hospitals) may set their own limits.

Human hair wigs cannot be prescribed on the NHS unless you are allergic to synthetic wigs or have a skin condition that may be made worse by a synthetic wig.

If you don't qualify for a free wig based on the conditions mentioned here, some hospitals may still provide you with a free wig, or one at a subsidised price. Speak to your healthcare team for more information.

Other financial help

You may be able to apply for grants and benefits from other organisations or charities to help pay for a wig. We give one-off grants to people with cancer that can be used towards the cost of a wig. You need to apply through a health or social care professional, such as a district nurse, social worker or a Macmillan nurse, if you have one.



You can speak to our cancer support specialists on 0808 808 00 00 to find out more about Macmillan Grants, and find out what other benefits you might be entitled to.

Buying a wig or hairpiece privately

Some people can afford to buy a wig privately. It may then be possible to get one that looks more natural, and it may also suit their hairstyle and texture better.

'The wigs on offer on the NHS weren't right for my ethnicity so I bought my own. I've got a collection: short, mid and longer length, and I really enjoy wearing them. I view them as an advantage as I can change my appearance when I like.'

Gina

If you want to buy a wig or hairpiece privately, you can get them from:

- wig departments in department stores, but remember that not all wig departments have a private area where you can try a wig on, so you may want to check this first
- a wig manufacturer
- a specialist wig shop.

There's a list of wig suppliers on pages 91–95.

You shouldn't have to pay VAT (Value Added Tax) on wigs or hairpieces when your hair loss is caused by cancer treatment. However, not all wig suppliers offer this service, so check before you buy from them. If they do offer the service, you will need to fill in a VAT exemption form, which the shop should provide at the time you buy the wig. The tax cannot be claimed back at a later date. For more information, contact HM Revenue & Customs on **0845 302 0203** or visit **[hmrc.gov.uk/vat](https://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat)**





Tips for wearing your wig or hairpiece

One of the most common worries people have about wearing a wig is how to keep it in place. Although a well-fitting wig should stay in place on its own, here are some tips to give you extra confidence that your wig is secure.

- Use double-sided tape. Wig specialists have hypoallergenic tape that doesn't irritate the skin. The tape is attached to the underside of the wig and gives a secure but comfortable bond. Surgical spirit can be used to remove any leftover adhesive. Your skin may be very sensitive due to your cancer treatment so ask your doctor or specialist nurse which tape you can use and whether it's okay to use surgical spirit.
- If you still have some of your own hair, or if it's growing back, it may be possible to keep your wig or hairpiece in place by using special clips in various hair colours. The wig specialist can advise you about this.
- Bend over and shake your head to check your wig or hairpiece is securely in place.
- Wear a hat or scarf to help secure your wig if it's a windy day.
- Wear something that is easy to take off, such as a cardigan or shirt if you're going to see the doctor for an examination. This is also a good idea when you're shopping and know that you will be trying on clothes.

Wearing your wig in public for the first time

When you wear your wig in public for the first time, you may want to wear it when you're with people you know well.

This can help you feel more confident and gives you the chance to gradually prepare yourself for wearing the wig with people you don't know.

Protecting your scalp

The lining of the wig can irritate the scalp, so it may be helpful to wear a thin, cotton wig liner underneath. These are usually available from wig suppliers. They can sometimes make a wig move around more, so you may need to experiment to find out what works best for you. Remember that your scalp may sweat more when you wear a wig, so you'll need to wash the wig and liner as advised by the wig specialist.

Safety

Take care not to expose your wig to a flame, for example from a candle or gas cooker. Real hair will frizz and synthetic hair can melt. Even the heat that comes out when opening an oven door can make the hair frizzy. Don't use the highest heat setting on your hairdryer as this can also melt the hair.

Changes to the wig

Check your hairdresser is trained to cut wigs if you want to change the style or cut it shorter.



Macmillan is working in partnership with TONI&GUY and the national charity mynewhair to provide access to professionals who are trained to cut and style wigs to your individual needs. See pages 90–91 for contact details.



Tips to stay cool while wearing your wig or hairpiece

Many people do not want to wear a wig as they think it will be hot. But there have been many advances in making wigs with a finer and lighter mesh. The tips below may also help you to stay cool while wearing a wig.

- Choose a synthetic wig – they are often lighter than human hair wigs.
- Wear a cotton wig liner on your scalp to absorb moisture and heat.
- Wash the wig and liner as advised by the wig specialist.
- Use a wet cloth or an alcohol-free unscented spray to refresh your scalp throughout the day.
- Whenever possible, for example in your home, take the wig off to let your scalp breathe.



AFTER TREATMENT

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Whether your hair will grow back and how quickly it will grow back will depend on the combination of drugs used, the strength of the dose and how many sessions of treatment you had. Your cancer specialist should be able to tell you what is likely to happen for you.

Chemotherapy

Any hair loss from chemotherapy treatment will almost always grow back. However, the new hair can be different from before treatment. It may be curlier, straighter or finer. It is sometimes fluffy and may be a different colour. Many people find their hair grows back unevenly at different speeds. Facial hair such as beards and moustaches may also grow back patchy or a different colour. This may take a while to return to what it was like before treatment.

'My main worry was that it would come back grey. Where I did lose it, it has grown back thicker and darker than it has ever been!'

Katharine

Sometimes, the changes to your new hair growth can be permanent, but this is rare. At first, the hair will be very fine, but in most people, the hair will gradually become thicker. You will probably have a full head of hair after 3–6 months. If you're concerned about your hair growth after treatment, speak to your doctor or nurse.

Twelve months after treatment, you should have a good idea of how thick your new hair will be. See pages 79–81 for tips on how to look after your hair after treatment.

Radiotherapy

Hair re-growth after radiotherapy will depend on lots of things, including the type and dose of treatment, the number of treatments given and the area of your body affected. Your radiographer can usually tell you before the treatment if your hair is likely to grow back.

If you have been told your hair will grow back, this can start once your skin has healed after treatment. On average, your hair will start to grow back 3–6 months after finishing your treatment, but it may take longer if the treatment dose has been high. The hair that grows back may be thinner, patchy or a different colour. After 12 months, you should have a good idea of how your new hair will look and feel.

Sometimes the hair loss is permanent. This can be especially upsetting if it affects the hair on your head.

If you have hair loss on your head, you may want to wear a hairpiece, wig or some other type of headwear (see pages 46–53). It may also be possible to have a hair transplant (see page 54). However, hair transplants are specialised treatments that aren't available on the NHS. If you are considering a hair transplant, contact the Institute of Trichologists for a list of qualified surgeons (see page 90). This option is not suitable for everyone.



Other treatments

Any hair loss from hormonal or biological therapies nearly always grows back once you have finished treatment. Your doctor can advise you about the type of drug you are taking.

As your hair grows back



Many people believe massaging their scalp will help their hair to grow faster. This is not true. In fact, aggressive massage can cause damage to new hair growth so it should be avoided.

As soon as your hair is long enough to style, you may no longer want to wear a wig or head covering. Having your hair styled by a hairdresser who knows you and understands your situation can be very helpful. Often people who were used to long hair find that a shorter style suits them. Your hairdresser can help you choose a style that suits you.



Macmillan is working in partnership with TONI&GUY and with the national charity mynewhair to provide specialist hair care for people affected by cancer. Consultants have been specially trained to advise on all aspects of hair loss, including cutting and styling wigs and hair re-growth. See pages 90–91 for contact details.

Hair products

As your hair grows back, you can use shampoo and styling products that suit your hair/scalp condition. Most shampoos and styling products can be used on a regular daily basis without any problems. But, if you notice that your scalp becomes irritated or the condition of your hair changes, seek professional advice.

Colouring, perming and relaxing

Once your hair is about 3 inches (7.5cm) long, and your scalp is in a healthy condition, you can have your hair tinted, permed or chemically relaxed if you want to.

It's best to seek professional advice if you have your hair tinted, permed or chemically relaxed after cancer treatment. Your hair and scalp can react differently so it is very important to carry out strand and skin sensitivity tests. This is needed even when it is the same chemicals being used by the same hairdresser that you used before cancer treatment.

A professional hairdresser can do tests to check that any chemicals used on your hair will not damage it or cause an allergic reaction on your scalp. They can also advise you about how to care for your hair after colouring or perming it.

You shouldn't use any chemicals on your hair without seeking professional advice if you:

- scalp is scaly, sore or irritated
- hair is drier than usual
- hair is very rough to the touch
- hair is lighter in colour than it was before your treatment
- hair appears to be breaking or not growing normally.

Colouring your own hair

If you want to colour your hair yourself, ask your hairdresser for advice.

Always try the colour on a small, hidden area of hair and scalp 48 hours before applying it to the rest of your hair. This is to make sure colours will not damage your hair or cause an allergic reaction to them. You should do this even if you have used the same product before. If you don't experience any increased sensitivity or problems with the colour test within 48 hours, it's safe to apply it to the rest of your hair.

Be aware that many products that claim to be natural actually contain chemicals that may occasionally cause an allergic reaction. This often includes henna products. Unless the henna is bright red, it will have other forms of tint added to it. It is therefore best avoided. If you use a henna product, the colour the henna produces may be more intense after chemotherapy treatment.

If you are colouring your hair at home, always carefully read and follow the instructions. If you want a permanent colour including highlights and lowlights, it is best to have this applied by a trained hairdresser.

Fine or wispy hair

Hair extensions can thicken fine or wispy hair and can be clipped on to your own hair. However, they can cause damage, even to healthy hair, so aren't suitable for weak or thin hair. Hair extensions are not available on the NHS.

Looking after your hair

Your hair may be dry or break easily even after cancer treatment has finished. Pages 37–38 have tips for looking after all types of hair during and after cancer treatment. Also see pages 39–40 for tips on caring for your skin following cancer treatment.



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About our information

We provide expert, up-to-date information about cancer. And all our information is free for everyone.

Order what you need

You may want to order more leaflets or booklets like this one. Visit **be.macmillan.org.uk** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

We have booklets on different cancer types, treatments and side effects. We also have information about work, financial issues, diet, life after cancer and information for carers, family and friends.

All of our information is also available online at **macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformation**

There you'll also find videos featuring real-life stories from people affected by cancer, and information from health and social care professionals.

Other formats

We also provide information in different languages and formats, including:

- audiobooks
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- Easy Read booklets
- large print
- translations.

Find out more at **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats**

If you'd like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Help us improve our information

We know that the people who use our information are the real experts. That's why we always involve them in our work. If you've been affected by cancer, you can help us improve our information.

We give you the chance to comment on a variety of information including booklets, leaflets and fact sheets.

If you'd like to hear more about becoming a reviewer, email reviewing@macmillan.org.uk You can get involved from home whenever you like, and we don't ask for any special skills – just an interest in our cancer information.



Other ways we can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we're here to support you. No one should face cancer alone.

Talk to us

If you or someone you know is affected by cancer, talking about how you feel and sharing your concerns can really help.

Macmillan Support Line

Our free, confidential phone line is open Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. Our cancer support specialists can:

- help with any medical questions you have about your cancer or treatment
- help you access benefits and give you financial advice
- be there to listen if you need someone to talk to
- tell you about services that can help you in your area.

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. There, you can speak with someone face to face.

Visit one to get the information you need, or if you'd like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone alone and in confidence.

Find your nearest centre at **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Talk to others

No one knows more about the impact cancer can have on your life than those who have been through it themselves. That's why we help to bring people together in their communities and online.

Support groups

Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, we can help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face to face with people who understand. 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

Thousands of people use our online community to make friends, blog about their experiences and join groups to meet other people going through the same things. You can access it any time of day or night. Share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)

The Macmillan healthcare team

Our nurses, doctors and other health and social care professionals give expert care and support to individuals and their families. Call us or ask your GP, consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals near you.

'Everyone is so supportive on the online community, they know exactly what you're going through. It can be fun too. It's not all just chats about cancer.'

Mal

Help with money worries

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you've been affected in this way, we can help.

Financial advice

Our financial guidance team can give you advice on mortgages, pensions, insurance, borrowing and savings.

Help accessing benefits

Our benefits advisers can offer advice and information on benefits, tax credits, grants and loans. They can help you work out what financial help you could be entitled to. They can also help you complete your forms and apply for benefits.

Macmillan Grants

Macmillan offers one-off payments to people with cancer. A grant can be for anything from heating bills or extra clothing to a much-needed break.

Call us on **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a financial guide or benefits adviser, or to find out more about Macmillan Grants. We can also tell you about benefits advisers in your area.

Visit [macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport) to find out more about how we can help you with your finances.

Help with work and cancer

Whether you're an employee, a carer, an employer or are self-employed, we can provide support and information to help you manage cancer at work. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/work](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/work)



Macmillan's My Organiser app

This free mobile app can help you manage your treatment, from appointment times and contact details, to reminders for when to take your medication. Search 'My Organiser' on the Apple App Store or Google Play on your phone.

Other useful organisations

There are lots of other organisations that can give you information or support.

Hair loss, beauty and cancer support organisations

Cancer Hair Care

The Caring Hair Studio,
5A Middle Row,
Stevenage SG1 3AN

Tel 01438 311322

(Wed–Fri, 10am–4pm)

Email

support@cancerhaircare.com

www.cancerhaircare.com

Website provides advice and practical tips on hair loss due to cancer treatment. Videos show how to put on wigs and scarves and create eyebrows and eyelashes. Herfordshire salon offers free sessions on scarves, make-up and wig cutting.

Hairdressing and Beauty Suppliers Association (HBSA)

Flat 1, Welbeck Court,
257 Kingsway,
Hove BN3 4JR

Tel 0845 519 3258

Email info@thehbsa.co.uk

www.thehbsa.co.uk

A network of industry professionals who share knowledge and offer support. The website has a directory of suppliers of hairdressing and beauty products, including wig makers.

Look Good Feel Better

West Hill House, 32 West Hill,
Epsom KT19 8JD

Tel 01372 747 500

Email info@lgfb.co.uk

**www.lookgood
feelbetter.co.uk**

A support service for women living with cancer. Holds free skincare and make-up workshops to help combat the visible side effects of cancer treatment and, in turn, boost confidence and well-being. Everyone is given a bag of products to use and take home as a gift at the end of the workshops.

Look Good Feel Better For Men

www.lookgoodfeelbetterformen.org

Has tips to help men deal with the side effects of cancer treatments on hair, skin, body and mind.

Teenage Cancer Trust

3rd Floor, 93 Newman Street, London W1T 3EZ

Tel 020 7612 0370

Email hello@

teenagecancertrust.org

www.teenagecancertrust.org

Provides support and information for young people with cancer, their families, schools and health professionals.

Specialist hair services

Breast Cancer Care's HeadStrong Service

Helpline 0808 800 6000

www.breastcancercare.org.uk

A free advisory service run by specially trained volunteers. Offers practical information and support on an individual appointment basis. You can attend as many times as you

like and can bring along a companion for support. Available at various locations in the UK – see the website for further details.

Institute of Trichologists

107 Trinity Road, Upper Tooting, London SW17 7SQ

Tel 0845 604 4657

Email

admin@trichologists.org.uk

www.trichologists.org.uk

The foremost professional association for trichologists (hair health specialists) in the world. Gives information about hair health and hair loss.

mynewhair – Trevor Sorbie

Email info@mynewhair.org

www.mynewhair.org

Working in partnership with Macmillan, this charity's website has a list of recommended salons that have been trained to offer expert advice and styling to make your wig individual to you. Contact the salons directly for specific prices. All consultations are free and some salons offer their service for free.

Philip Kingsley Trichological Clinic

54 Green Street,
London W1K 6RU
Tel 020 7629 4004

Email

reception@philipkingsley.co.uk

www.philipkingsley.co.uk

Provides consultations and advice about hair health. Consultations are with qualified trichologists who have experience with hair loss due to cancer treatment.

Strength in Style with TONI&GUY

Tel 0808 808 00 00
**www.macmillan.org.uk/
strengthinstyle**

Macmillan is working in partnership with TONI&GUY to provide specialist hair care for people affected by cancer. Strength in Style Consultants, who have been specially trained in the effects of cancer treatment on hair, can help clients with choosing, adjusting and cutting wigs. They also advise on hair as it grows again so that people affected by cancer can have one point of contact to help them deal with hair loss and re-growth.

Wig makers and suppliers

A and A Studios

8–10 Tanfield,
Edinburgh EH3 5HF
Tel 0131 5567057

www.aastudios.co.uk

Provides advice on options for hair loss including custom-made wigs and wig cutting. Some services only available at the Edinburgh studio.

Ann Sterling Hair Design and Wig Specialist

18 Bellegrove Road,
Welling DA16 3PU
Tel 020 8303 2710

Email

annsterling@hotmail.co.uk

www.ann-sterling.co.uk

Offers ready-made and custom-made human hair wigs, acrylic wigs and toupees from the Kent salon.

Barbara Carpenter

Wig Consultants

Maidstone consultancy:

7 Broadway Shopping Centre,
Maidstone ME16 8PS

Tel 01622 757 343

Herne Bay consultancy:

180 The High Street,
Herne Bay CT6 5AG

Tel 01227 373 431

Email

info@carpenterswigs.co.uk

www.carpenterswigs.co.uk

Provides a personalised wig fitting and styling service.

Consultations by appointment only at the Kent salons.

Carrie Jones Trichologist

Llanerch Lodge, Hyssington,
Churchstoke, Montgomery,
Powys SY15 6DZ

Tel 01588 620761

Email [enquiry@](mailto:enquiry@carriejonestrichologist.co.uk)

carriejonestrichologist.co.uk

www.carriejonestrichologist.co.uk

Provides wigs cut and styled to your preferences at the Shropshire/Welsh Borders clinic.

Galerus Wigs

24 High Street, Draperstown,
Co. Derry BT45 7AA

Tel 028 796 28325

Email info@galeruswigs.com

www.galeruswigs.com

Provides custom-made wigs and a wig cutting and styling service in Northern Ireland.

First consultation is free.

Great Looking Hair Centre

12 Lebanon Close,
Watford WD17 4JW

Tel 020 3005 3269

Email

info@greatlookinghair.co.uk

www.greatlookinghair.co.uk

Specialises in hair replacement. Offers free consultations, wig fittings, eyelash makeover services, and wig repair services. Salons in Birmingham, Hertfordshire, Manchester, Yorkshire and Scotland.

Hair InXS

7 Peascod Street,

Windsor SL4 1DT

Tel 01753 859777**Email** hairinxs@btinternet.com**www.hairinxs.com**

Provides individual consultations from the Berkshire salon for its hair extension system that can cover up a variety of types of hair loss.

Little Princess Trust

28 Castle Street,

Hereford HR1 2NW

Tel 0845 094 4509**Email**info@littleprincesses.org.uk**www.littleprincesses.org.uk**

Provides free, real hair wigs to children affected by hair loss due to cancer treatment. Also provides a personal fitting and styling service. Covers the UK and Republic of Ireland

Mandeville of**London Limited**

5 The Coda Centre,

189 Munster Road

London SW6 6AW

Tel 020 8741 5959**Email** contact@mandeville-wigs.co.uk**www.mandeville-wigs.co.uk**

Offers quality, handmade wigs which are cut and styled on the customers' heads to their preferred style. Also has a range of ready-made wigs and hairpieces. Consultations by appointment only at the London salon.

Raoul Limited

34 Craven Road,

London W2 3QA

Tel 020 7723 7173**Email** [enquiries@](mailto:enquiries@raoulwigmakers.co.uk)raoulwigmakers.co.uk**www.raoulwigmakers.co.uk**

Offers high-quality, bespoke human hair wigs and hairpieces and a large stock of ready-made acrylic wigs. Consultations by appointment only at London salon.

Taylored Pieces

Giggleswick, Mynyddbach,
Chepstow NP16 6RW

Tel 0781 207 9143

www.tayloredpieces.com

Provides wigs and hairpieces, covering South and West Wales, the Midlands and South West England. First consultation over phone or Skype is free.

Trendco Alternative Hair Centre

64 Westbourne Grove,
London W2 5SH

Tel 0207 221 2646

Email London@trendco.co.uk

www.trendco.co.uk

The UK's largest supplier of wigs and hairpieces with retail outlets in London, Hove, Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham. Mail order also available.

Wigbank

Elizabeth Cameron,
Beaumont House,
15 St John's Place,
Perth PH1 5SZ

Tel 07831 763062

Email info@wigbank.com

www.wigbank.com

A UK-wide network of Wigbanks offering donated wigs for sale and hire. Used wigs are washed, reconditioned and sold for between £10–£20 or you can hire one for £5. Also has new wigs for £40.

Wig Specialities Limited

77 Ashmill Street,
London NW1 6RA

Tel 020 7724 0020

Email wigspecialities@
btconnect.com

www.wigspecialities.com

Individually-designed, handmade wigs and hairpieces made of human hair with an exact colour-matching service. Consultation by appointment only at London salon.

Wigs4u

Algores Way, Wisbech,
Cambridge PE13 2TQ

Tel 01945 587584

www.wigs4u.co.uk

A collection of natural-looking lightweight wigs. Fittings at Cambridgeshire salon by appointment only. Mail order available from website.

Wig-Wham!

Hawthorns, 28 Sharman Way,
Gnosall, Stafford ST20 0LX

Tel 01785 823 531

Email joy.tuft@btinternet.com

www.wig-wham.co.uk

Clients can try out wigs in a comfortable home environment and have them trimmed and customised to suit individual needs. By appointment only in Staffordshire.

Wigs World

Tel 01299 861327

Email sales@wigsworld.co.uk

www.wigsworld.co.uk

Offers a wide range of synthetic and human hair wigs for people affected by cancer. Online shopping only. Free telephone consultation service.

Wills Wigs

The Studio, Holt House,
49 Birmingham Road,
Bromsgrove B61 0DR

Tel 01527 871 709

Email info@willswigs.co.uk

www.willswigs.co.uk

Offers a range of wigs and headwear with a team of highly trained fitters. Appointment only at Worcestershire salon.

Hats, scarves and turbans**Bohemia Fashions****Headwear**

Tel 01582 750 083

Email

info@bohemiaheadwear.co.uk

www.bohemiaheadwear.co.uk

Comfortable and affordable scarves, hats, turbans and bandanas for people with hair loss.

Buffera Limited

Tel 01707 852 244

Email sales@buffwear.co.uk

www.buffwear.co.uk

Multifunctional headwear that acts as a bandana, thermal scarf or hat, or can be worn underneath a wig to prevent irritation and let skin breathe.

Chemo Headwear

Lodsworth Cottage, The Street,
Lodsworth GU28 9BZ

Tel 01798 861501

www.chemoheadwear.co.uk

Handmade hats, headscarves,
bandanas and turbans.

Chemotherapy Headwear

Tel 01483 901403

Email customerservice@
chemotherapyheadwear.com

**www.chemotherapy
headwear.com**

Comfortable and practical hats
and head scarves.

Cosifit

Tel 01323 325098

www.cosifit-headwear.co.uk

A wide range of hats, berets,
caps, bands and scarves.

4MyHead

Tel 07505 028 099

www.4myhead.com

Headscarves, hats and beanies
for people with hair loss.

Hats 4 Heads

Tel 0845 576 4287

Email info@hats4heads.co.uk

www.hats4heads.co.uk

Hats, scarves, turbans and
bandanas for men and women
with hair loss.

Luscious Lids

14 Briarswood Rise,
Dibden Purlieu,
Southampton SO45 5SW

Tel 023 8084 8687

Email sheila.wilson@
lusciouslids.com

www.lusciouslids.com

Headwear for women with
hair loss, including turbans,
headbands, scarves
and wraps.

Necessity Headwear Collection

NHC at The Caring Hair Studio,
5A Middle Row,
Stevenage SG1 3AN

Tel 01438 311322

**www.necessityheadwear.
com**

Large selection of headwear for
people who have hair loss due
to cancer treatment.

YOUR NOTES AND QUESTIONS



Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up to date but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it.

Thanks

This booklet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by our Chief Medical Editor, Tim Iveson, Macmillan Consultant Medical Oncologist.

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Sources

We've listed a sample of the sources used in the publication below. If you'd like further information about the sources we use, please contact us at bookletfeedback@macmillan.org.uk

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National Cancer Institute. *Radiation therapy and you*. www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/radiationtherapy.pdf (accessed December 2014).

NHS Choices. *Cancer and hair loss*. www.nhs.uk/Livewell/cancer/Pages/Cancerandhairloss (accessed December 2014).

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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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



Strength in Style

TONI&GUY is working in partnership with Macmillan to develop a training programme called Strength in Style.

It ensures that people affected by cancer will have access to a salon in their area where a trained professional can provide specialist support and advice on hair care. The initial consultation is free.

There are over 100 salons trained to know about speaking to people affected by cancer, the effects of treatment on hair and wig styling and cutting. Visit toniandguy.com to find a salon near you.



mynewhair hair loss and wig services

Macmillan has joined forces with mynewhair to help you find hair experts in your area who can give you advice

to help rebuild your confidence after cancer. Founded by hairdresser, Trevor Sorbie, M.B.E., mynewhair is a network of trained hair professionals who can provide advice and wig cutting services.

Contact Macmillan on **0808 808 00 00** (Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm) for contact details of your local mynewhair adviser. For further information about mynewhair, visit mynewhair.org

Are you a hairdresser?

Mynewhair also offers training for hairdressers who wish to offer the service in their salons. If you're a hairdresser and would like to book a place on a mynewhair training course, contact the L'Oréal Academy on **0208 762 4200** or email intacademy@uk.loreal.com

More than one in three of us will get cancer. For most of us it will be the toughest fight we ever face. And the feelings of isolation and loneliness that so many people experience make it even harder. But you don't have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way.

We are the nurses and therapists helping you through treatment. The experts on the end of the phone. The advisers telling you which benefits you're entitled to. The volunteers giving you a hand with the everyday things. The campaigners improving cancer care. The community there for you online, any time. The supporters who make it all possible.

Together, we are all Macmillan Cancer Support.

For cancer support every step of the way, call Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00 (Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm) or visit macmillan.org.uk

Hard of hearing? Use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.
Non-English speaker? Interpreters available.
Braille and large print versions on request.

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MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**