

Who to contact for information or support

Your key worker: if you are not sure who your key worker is, please ask your chemotherapy nurse.

My key worker is:

Contact:

Your GP will be involved in your cancer journey, and will be a source of advice and information for you.

Macmillan Information and Support Centre

Advice and information for all those affected by cancer.

Tel: 0116 258 6189 Website: www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/cancerinfo

Coping with Cancer

Practical and emotional support for anyone affected by cancer.

Tel: 0116 223 0055 Website: www.c-w-c.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

As well as the information available on their website, Macmillan produces a range of booklets for those who have finished their treatment, including:

- What to do after cancer treatment ends: 10 top tips
- Managing the late effects of bowel cancer treatment
- Managing the late effects of breast cancer treatment
- Managing the late effects of head and neck cancer treatment
- Bone health
- Your feelings after cancer treatment

These can be obtained free of charge from Macmillan Cancer Support: 0808 808 00 00

Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

Age UK Macmillan Project

Offers support to anyone over the age of 50 who has been affected by cancer.

Tel: 0116 223 7370 or 0116 204 6440

Reduced immunity

You are still at risk of infection

Call the Chemotherapy Suite if you are unwell or have a high temperature after your last treatment. Your blood counts should start to return to normal limits over the four to six weeks after finishing your chemotherapy.

The Chemotherapy Emergency Number is 0808 178 2212

Tiredness (fatigue)

Tiredness builds up gradually whilst having chemotherapy.

Treatment such as surgery and radiotherapy also cause tiredness. Some people return to their usual energy levels quite quickly. However, tiredness can last for six months to a year, and in some cases even longer. Poor concentration due to tiredness is common and this can sometimes affect your memory.

Things that may help fatigue

Allow for rest times during your day. Plan activities for times in the day when you feel less tired. Gentle exercise, like walking, can help improve your stamina. Have a regular night-time routine.

You will slowly begin to notice you have more energy and your level of activity will increase as this happens.

Keep a diary of your activities so improvements and progress can be seen.

Macmillan Cancer Support produces a booklet called "Coping with fatigue". This can be ordered by contacting Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00.

Pins and needles (peripheral neuropathy)

Some chemotherapy drugs cause altered sensations such as tingling and numbness in your fingers and toes.

This often gets worse before it gets better, and can take as long as six months to a year to settle down.

If the numbness and tingling are still present a year after treatment, it will probably not go away completely.

Excessive heat or cold will make it feel worse. It can, in very rare circumstances, cause problems with mobility and movement.

Lymphoedema

Lymphoedema usually affects an arm or leg but can affect other parts of the body. It is swelling that can develop if lymph nodes have been removed due to surgery, or damaged by radiotherapy.

Preventing lymphoedema

- Where gloves to protect your hands when gardening or doing DIY
- Avoid getting scratched by pets
- Avoid sun damage to your skin
- Clean any cuts immediately to avoid the risk of infection
- Do not allow anyone to insert a needle, take blood, or monitor your blood pressure on your infected limb.
- Seek medical advice if you are concerned that you may have a problem

Lymphoedema (continued)

Signs of lymphoedema

- Swelling
- Heaviness of the limb
- Dry, itchy skin
- Stiffness and limited movement
- Discomfort
- Redness and rash

Treatment of lymphoedema

Specialist care is available from lymphoedema specialist nurses. You will need to be referred by your GP, consultant or nurse specialist.

Macmillan Cancer Support produces a booklet called "Understanding lymphoedema". This can be ordered by contacting Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00.

Hair loss

If you have lost your hair due to chemotherapy, you will notice it starting to grow back about four to six weeks after finishing chemotherapy. It may be different texture, colour or come back curly even though it was straight before treatment. After twelve to sixteen weeks you should have a good covering of fine hair. Wear your wig or headwear until you feel comfortable to show off your new style.

Wait at least four to five months before colouring your hair. Always do a patch test prior to applying the dye as your scalp may be sensitive. Use a dye that is semi-permanent and vegetable-based for the first few times.

The **Hair Loss Service** is based in the Macmillan Information Centre at the Leicester Royal Infirmary and can be contacted on: 0116 258 6189.

Getting back to normal

You may be able to go back work quite soon after finishing your chemotherapy treatment. However, you may not be able to go back to work for some time because of the effects of cancer and its treatment.

If you need advice on benefits or going back to work, please contact:

CAB Macmillan Helpline

A free benefits advice service for those affected by cancer in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Tel: 0300 456 8400

If you are at school, college or university please ask your key worker about the support that can be offered, or contact the Information Centre on 0116 258 6189.

Your key worker might have mentioned the **HOPE** (Help Overcoming Problems Effectively) programme to you. This programme is aimed at helping people become more knowledgeable, skilled and confident in managing the physical, emotional and psychological consequences of living with cancer. Contact the Macmillan Information and Support Centre for more details.

Tel: 0116 258 6189

