

In partnership with

**MACMILLAN**  
CANCER SUPPORT

easy  
read

# Having surgery





# About this easy read booklet



This booklet is about having surgery.



You can learn about what will happen when you go to hospital for surgery.



If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.



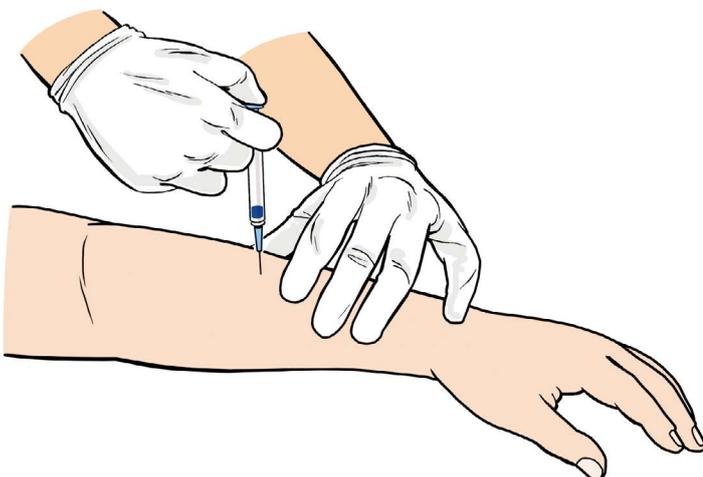
# Having minor surgery



Minor surgery means having a small **operation**. An **operation** is when a doctor removes, replaces or fixes something inside your body.



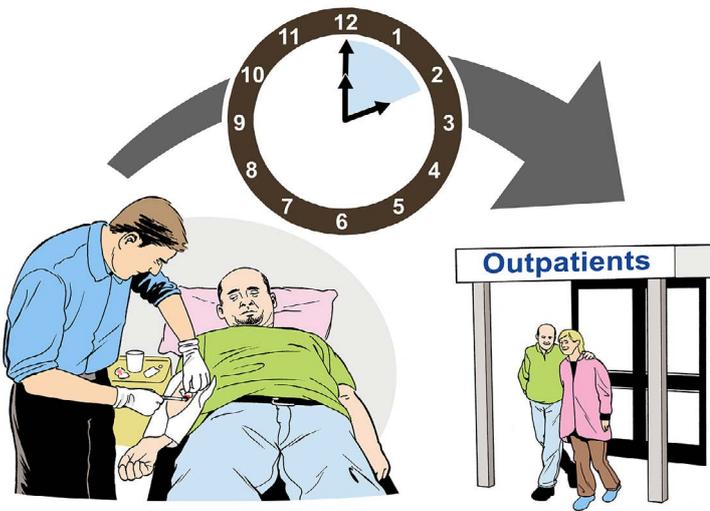
You will be awake during minor surgery. But the doctor will give you medicine so you do not feel anything.



You will usually have the medicine in a small **injection** on the part of your body where you will have the surgery.



An **injection** is when a needle is put through your skin to put medicine into your body.



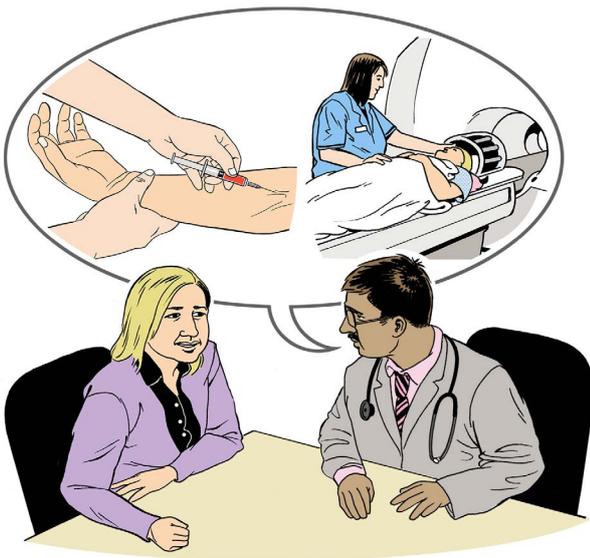
You can usually go home a few hours after the operation.



# Having major surgery



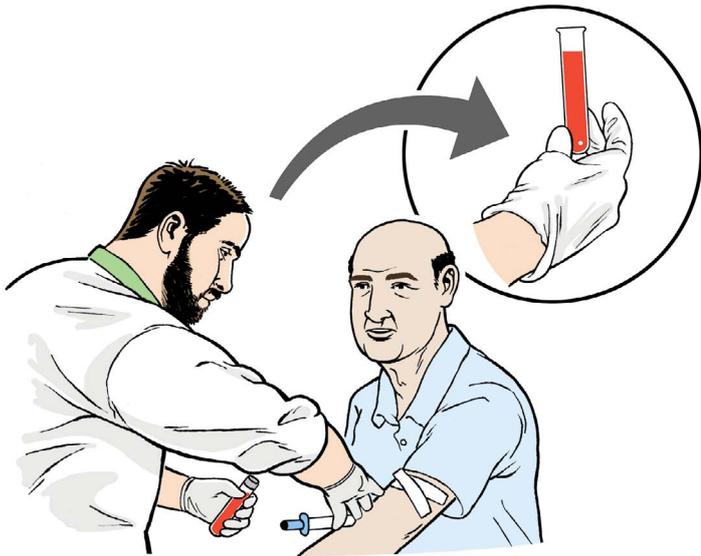
Major surgery means having a bigger operation. Before major surgery, your doctor may want you to have some more tests. This is to make sure it is OK for you to have surgery.



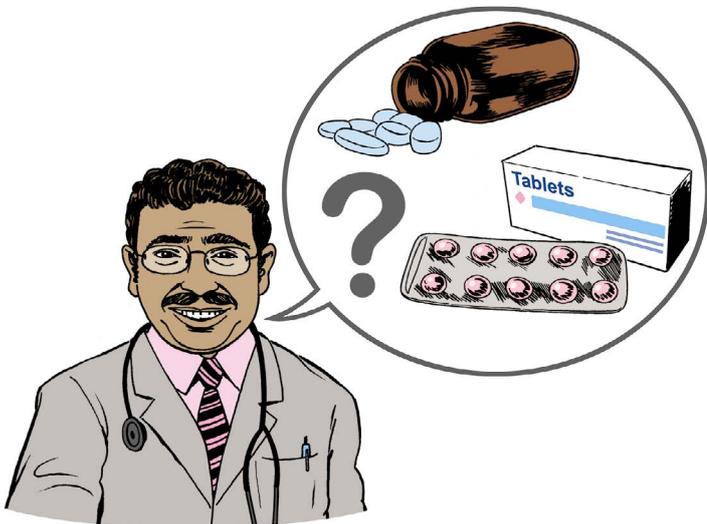
These tests may include **blood tests, scans, x-rays** or other tests.



**Scans and x-rays** are ways of taking photos of the inside of the body.



**Blood tests** are when a doctor looks at a small sample of blood.



The doctor will ask you about any medicines you take, for example for **asthma** or **diabetes**. The doctor will tell you how to take your medicines before surgery.



**Asthma** is a condition where people find it hard to breathe.



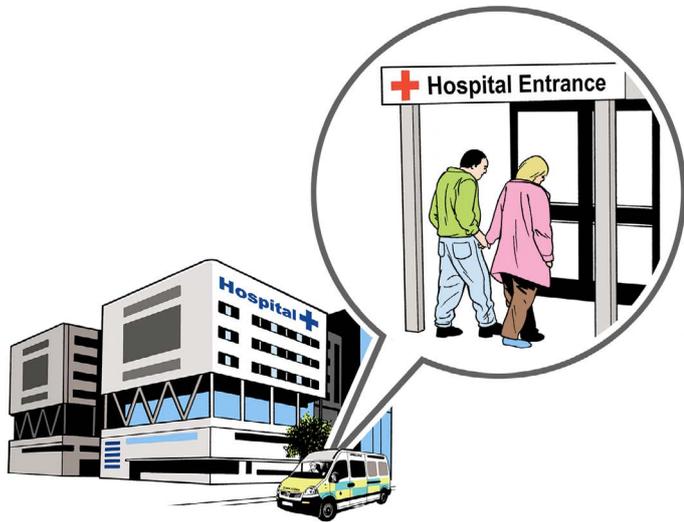
**Diabetes** is an illness where the body cannot use sugar properly.



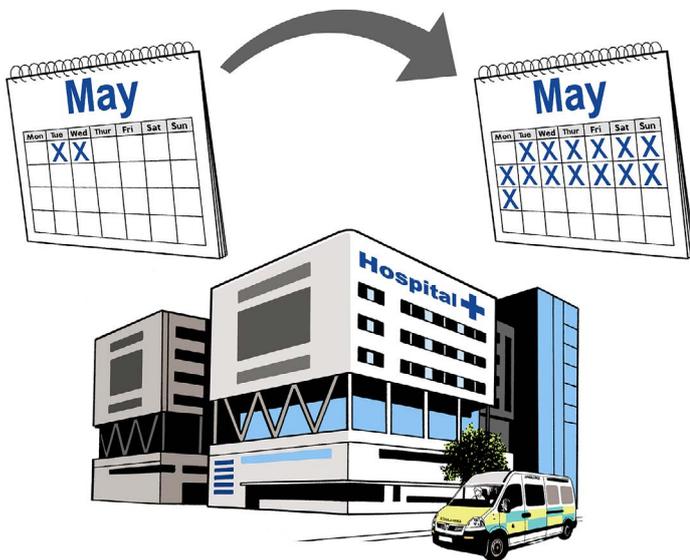
Usually you must not eat or drink anything for a few hours before major surgery.



Ask the doctor what time you have to stop eating and drinking.



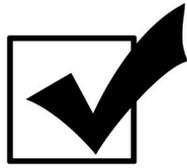
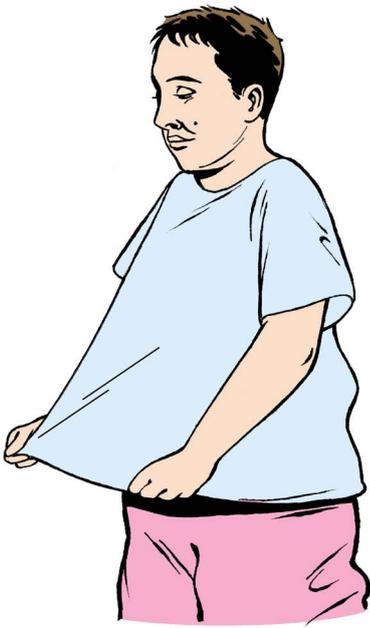
When you go for surgery you will need someone to come with you. They can support you and stay for as long as you need them.



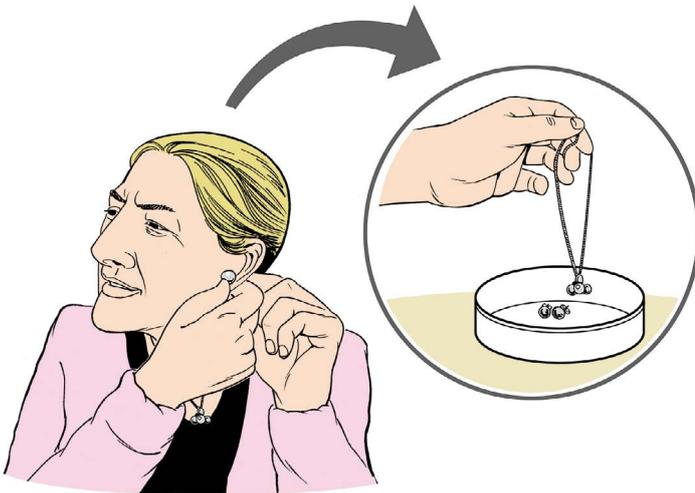
After major surgery, you stay in hospital for at least a few days. Sometimes you stay for a week or two.



Pack a bag to take into hospital with you. You may need your toothbrush, washing things, nightwear and some clothes.



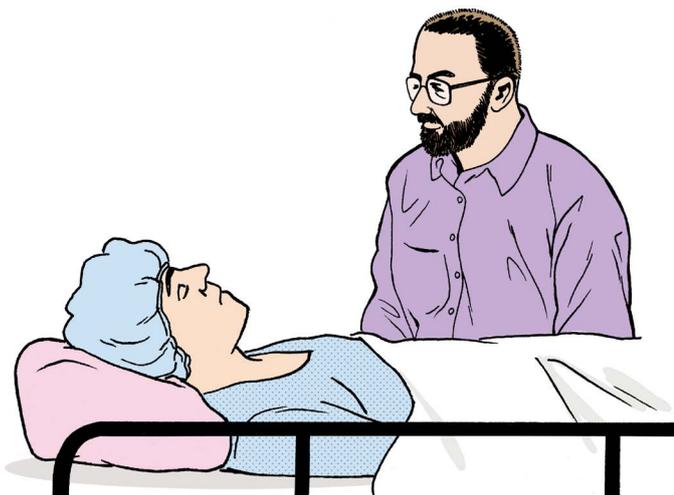
Pack or wear some loose, comfy clothing. This will be easier to wear after your operation.



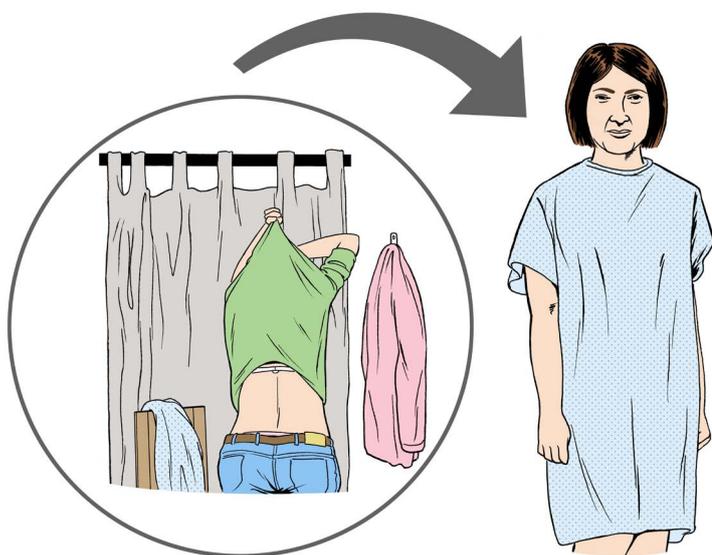
Leave any jewellery at home where it will be safe. You cannot wear it during the operation.



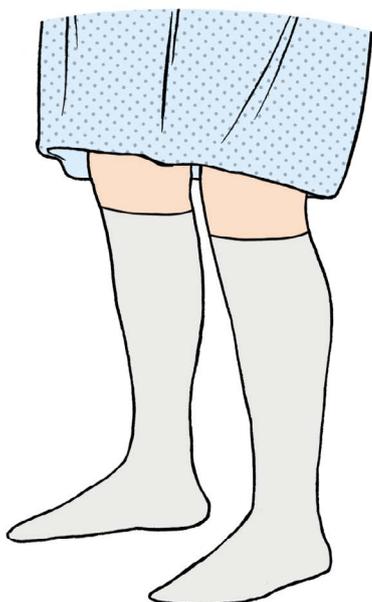
A doctor called a **surgeon** will do the operation. They are specially trained to do operations. There will also be other health professionals looking after you during the operation and after it.



The person who is supporting you can stay with you before the operation.



Before the operation, you take off your clothes and put on a hospital gown.



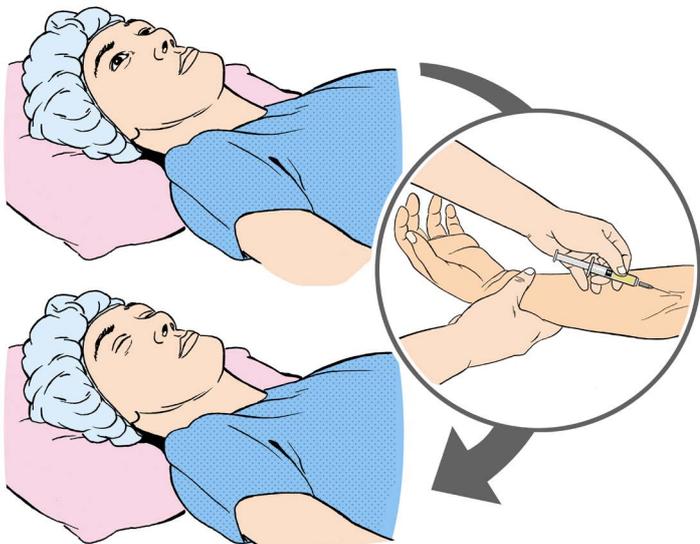
Your nurse may give you long tight socks to wear. You wear these during and after the operation. They help the blood move around your body.



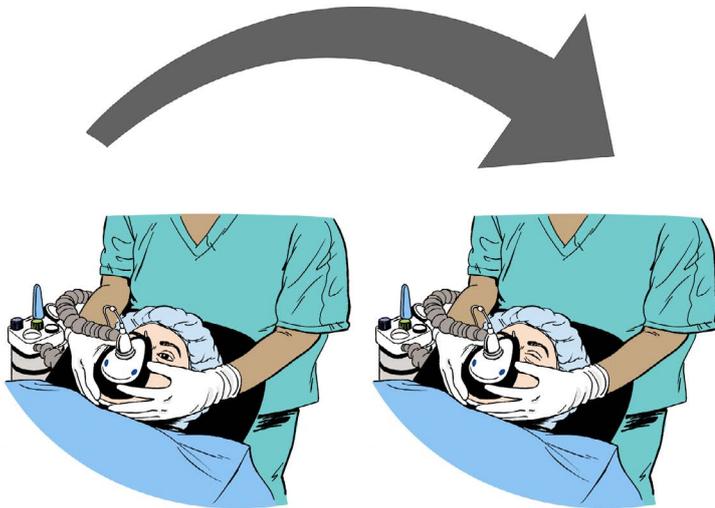
Your doctor or nurse may give you medicine to help you relax.



The nurse will clean the part of your body that is going to be operated on. They may shave it too.



For major surgery you will have a **general anaesthetic**. This is medicine to make you go to sleep for a short time, so you don't feel any pain when you have an operation.



Then you breathe in gas through a face mask. This will put you into a deep sleep.



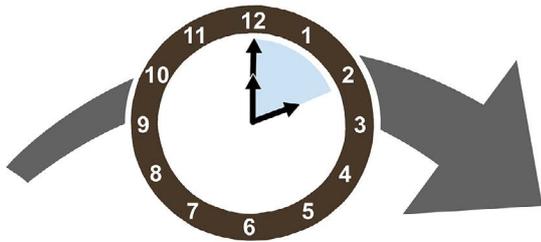
When you are completely asleep the surgeon will do the operation. You will not feel anything while you are asleep.



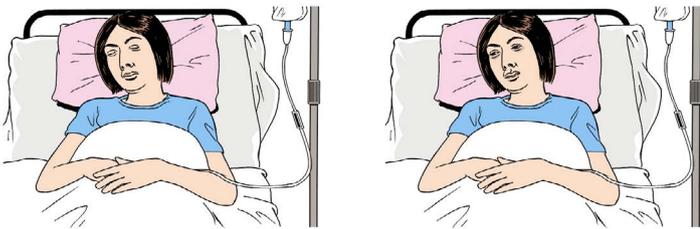
# Recovering after surgery



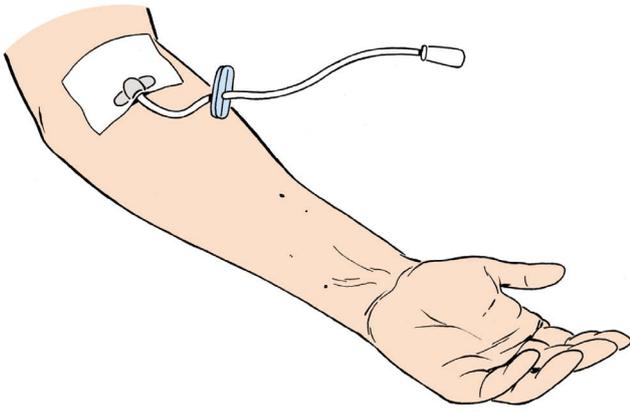
After surgery you will be taken to a recovery room. This is where you are looked after until you wake up.



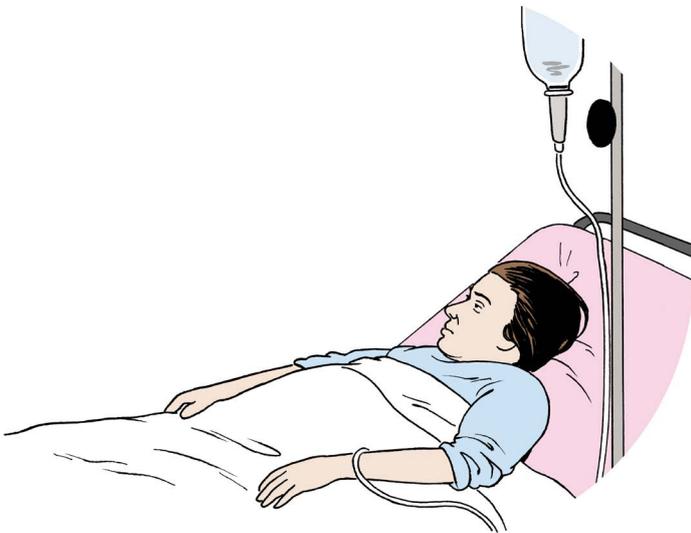
If you have had a general anaesthetic you usually wake up within one to two hours.



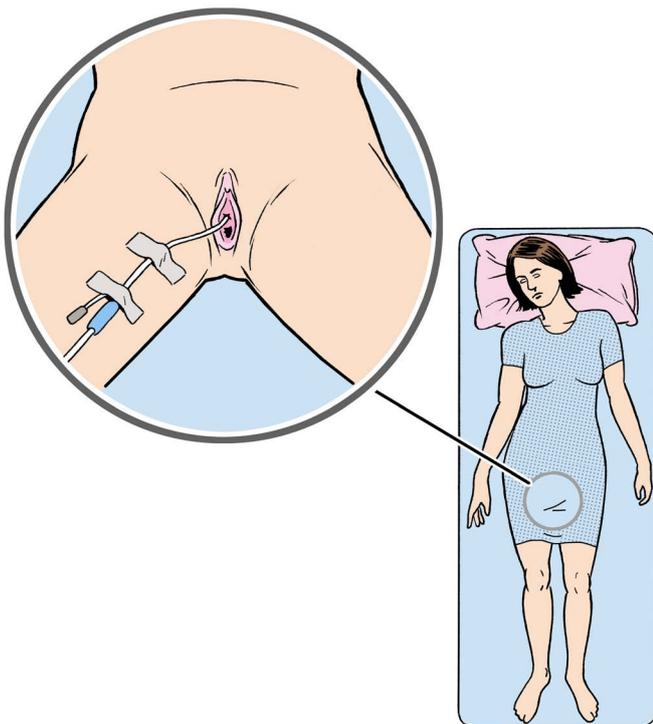
When you wake, you may feel sleepy or confused for some time.



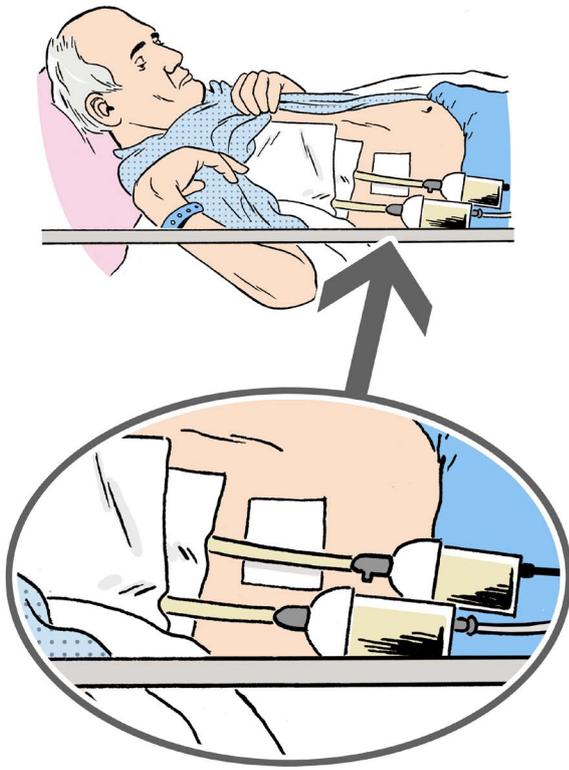
When you wake up, you may have some tubes attached to you:



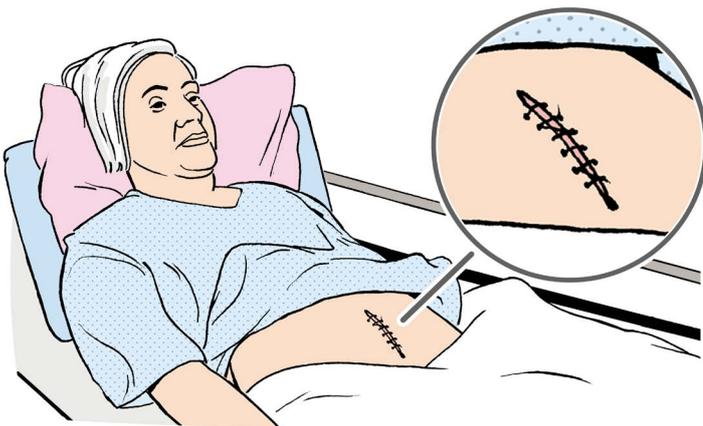
- You may have a tube in your arm or hand. This gives you fluids and medicines until you can eat and drink.



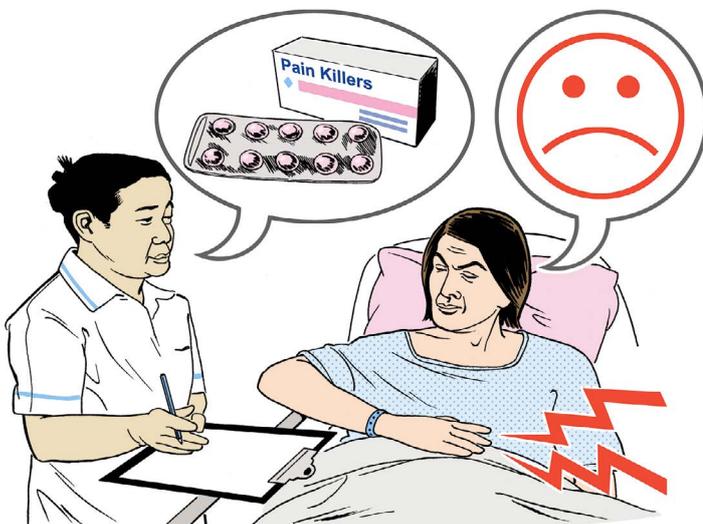
- You may have a tube coming out from where you pee. This is called a **catheter**. Your pee comes down this tube into a bag. This means you can pee without going to the toilet.



- You may have a tube coming out from where the operation was done. This is called a drain. It collects any fluid from your **surgical wound**.



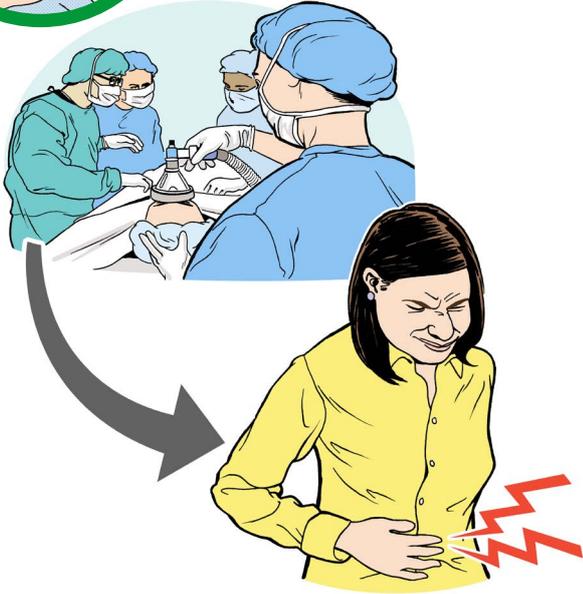
A **surgical wound** is a cut in the skin where an operation was done.



You might feel pain. It's important to tell your nurse or the person who gives you support if you are in pain. You can have medicine to help.



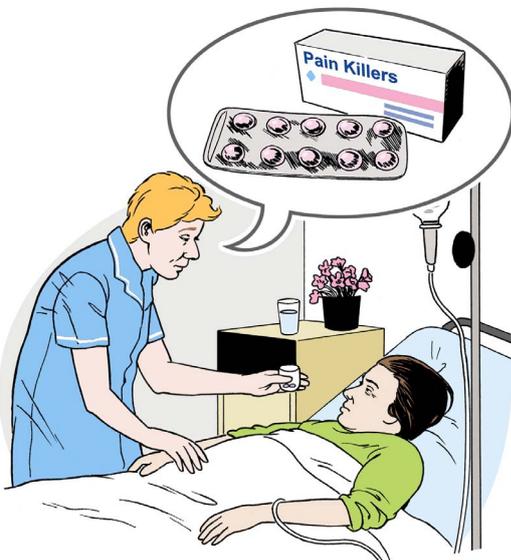
# Side effects



There are sometimes **side effects** after surgery. Side effects are things that happen in your body because of the surgery.



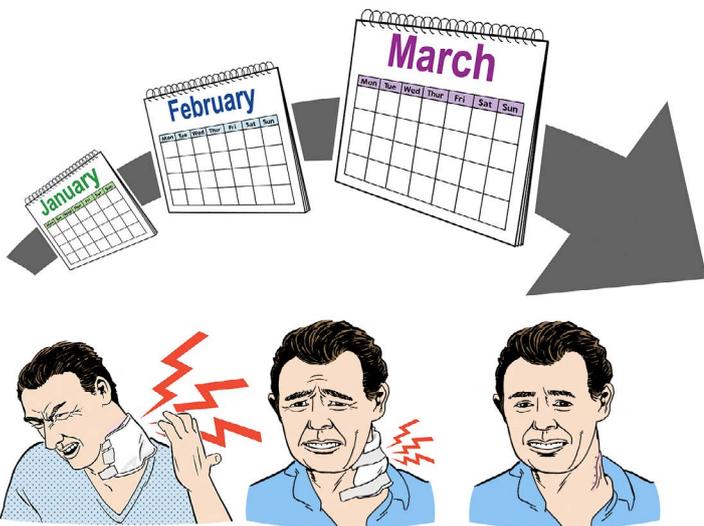
Pain can be a side effect. You will usually have some pain after an operation. It is very important to tell your nurse or doctor that you are in pain.



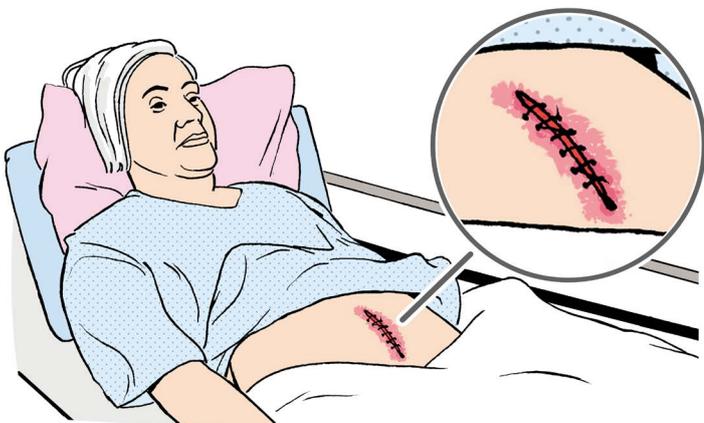
They can give you medicine to stop the pain.



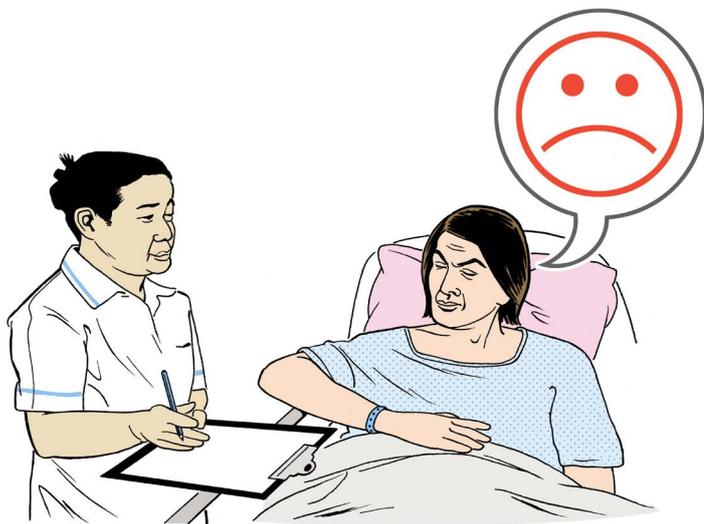
Swelling, soreness and stiffness can be side effects. It's normal for the area of the operation to be swollen, sore or stiff.



This should slowly get better as you heal.



Another side effect you could have after an operation is an **infection**. An infection is when your body is attacked by a bacteria or virus. Infections cause you harm and might make you feel unwell.



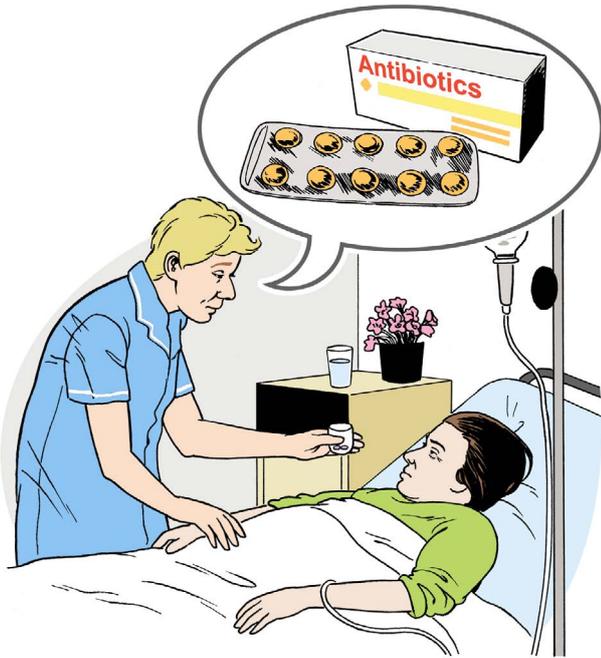
Tell a nurse or doctor straight away if your surgical wound is hot, painful, bleeds or leaks any fluid. This means your wound may have an infection.



It is important that surgical wounds are kept clean and the dressings are changed often. In hospital, a nurse will do this for you.



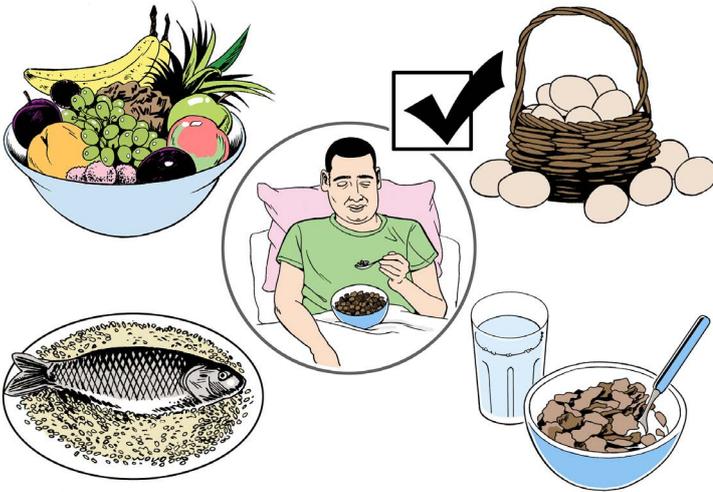
When you go home a nurse may come to your house to check and clean your surgical wound.



If your surgical wound becomes infected the doctor may give you some antibiotics. These are medicines that stop infections in your body.



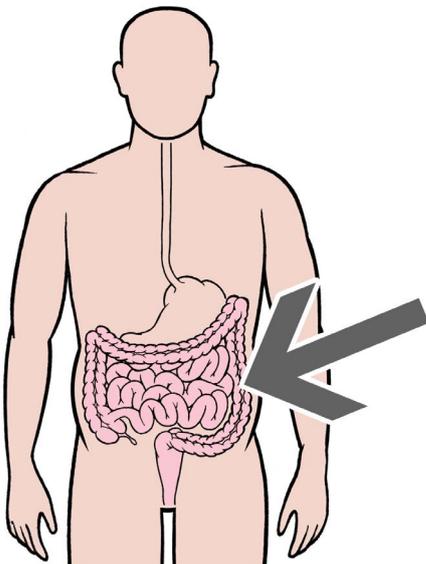
# Diet after surgery



After surgery you will need to eat healthy food. This helps your body to heal.



Some operations can make eating hard. For example, operations on your throat, stomach or **bowel**.



The **bowel** is inside your body. It is a long tube which helps digest food.



If you have any problems eating or drinking after surgery, talk to a doctor or nurse. They can make sure you get any help you need.



# How Macmillan can help you

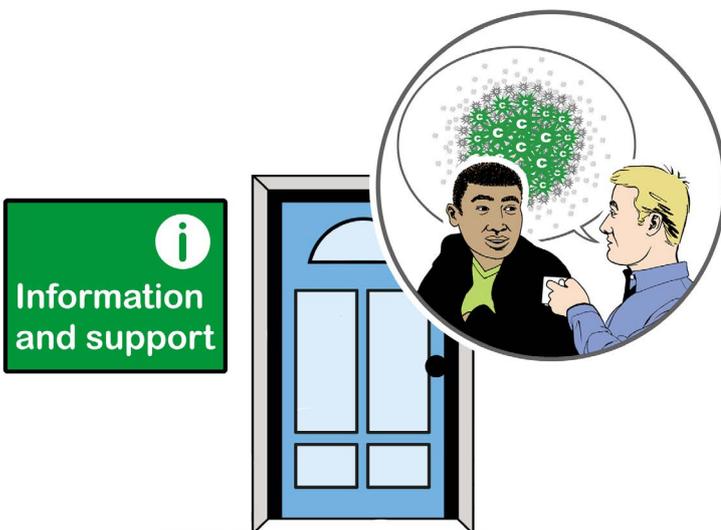


You can get support from:

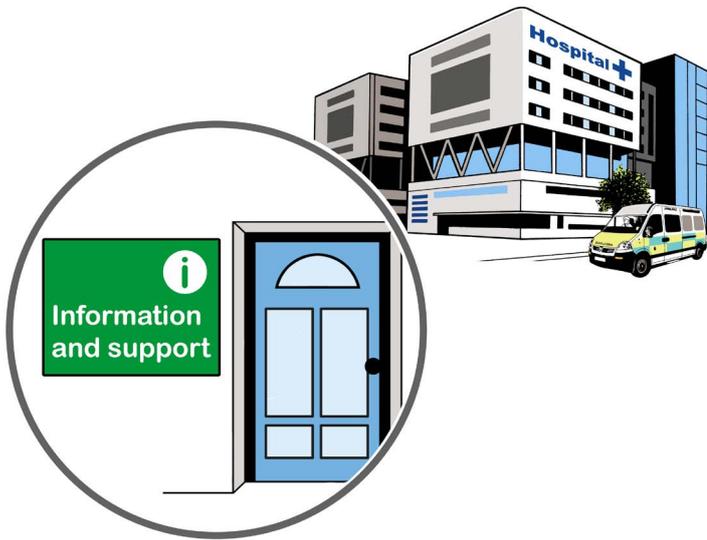
- The Macmillan Support Line. Call **0808 808 00 00** 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.



- The Macmillan website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk) for lots of information about cancer and living with cancer.



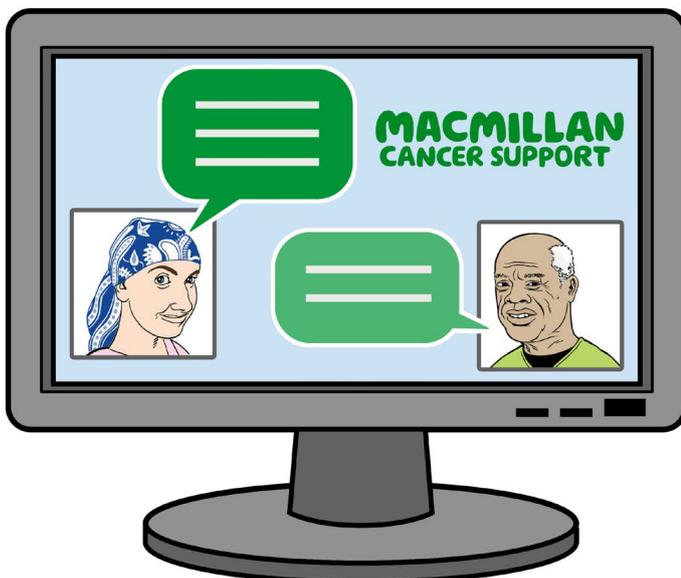
- Information centres. At an information centre, you can talk to a cancer support specialist and get written information.



Find your nearest centre at [macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres) or call us. Your hospital might have a centre.



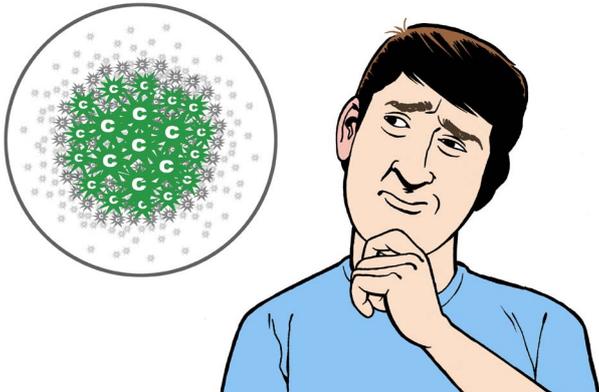
- Local support groups. Find a group near you at [macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups) or call us.



- The Macmillan Online Community. You can talk to other people in similar situations at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)



# More easy read booklets



Order more easy read booklets from [macmillan.org.uk/easyread](http://macmillan.org.uk/easyread)

There are booklets on lots of topics:

## About Macmillan

- How Macmillan Cancer Support can help you

## About cancer

- Lung cancer
- What is cancer?

## Signs and symptoms

- Breast care for women
- Cervical screening
- How to check your balls [testicles]
- Screening for cancer
- Signs of cancer
- Symptoms of cervical cancer
- Symptoms of prostate cancer

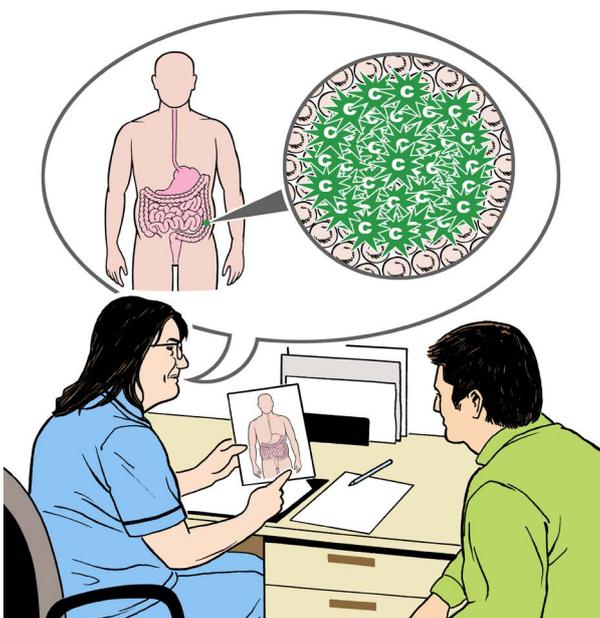


## Living a healthy life

- Be safe in the sun
- Drink less alcohol
- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Have safe sex
- Stop smoking

## Tests for cancer

- Having a biopsy
- Having a colonoscopy
- Having a CT scan
- Having an endoscopy
- Having examinations and blood tests
- Having an MRI scan
- Having an ultrasound
- Having an x-ray



## Being told you have cancer

- Finding out you have cancer
- Getting your test results
- Seeing the doctor



## Treatment for cancer

- Chemotherapy
- Giving your consent
- Having surgery
- Radiotherapy
- Side effects from chemotherapy
- Side effects from radiotherapy
- Treatments for prostate cancer



## Living with cancer

- 7 steps to equal healthcare
- After treatment for cancer
- Claiming benefits when you have cancer
- Complementary therapies
- Help with costs when you have cancer
- Talking about cancer and your feelings
- Things that are important to me
- Work and cancer
- Your feelings and cancer
- Your sex life and cancer
- Your social life and cancer



## End of life

- Changes that can happen at the end of life
- Choosing where to die
- Getting ready to die
- If you are dying from cancer
- Making decisions about the future if you are dying
- Spirituality and religion at the end of life
- The end of life
- Thinking about your funeral
- Who can help if you are dying



## After someone dies

- Going to a funeral when someone dies
- Grief and loss when someone dies
- How you may feel when someone dies
- What can help you feel better when someone dies

To order easy read booklets like this one go to the website [macmillan.org.uk/easyread](http://macmillan.org.uk/easyread) or call us on **0808 808 00 00**

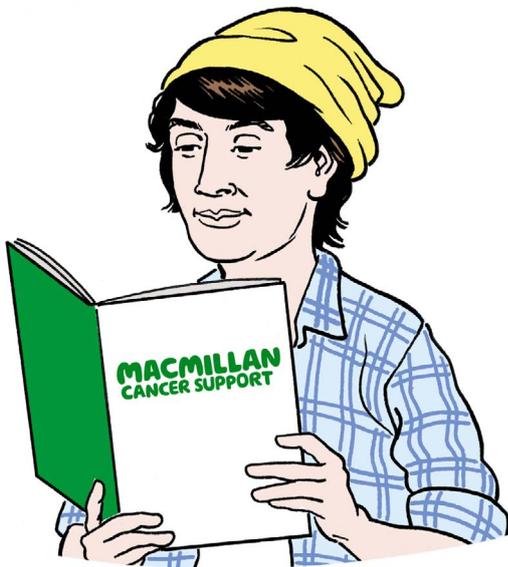


# More information and resources



## Macmillan website

There is lots of information about cancer at [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)



## Booklets about cancer

You can order booklets about cancer from [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk)



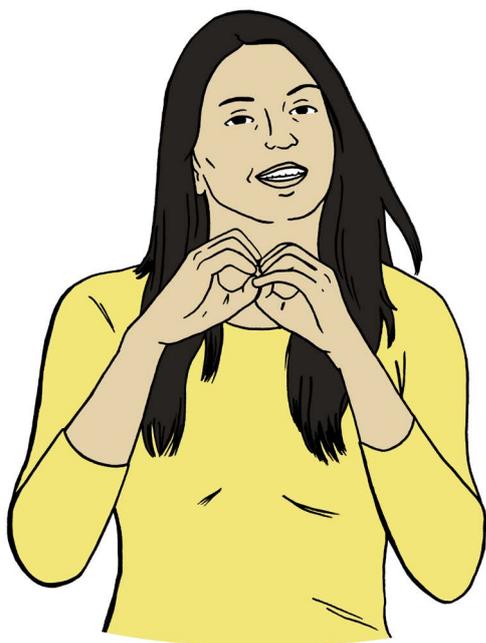
## Videos

You can watch videos about cancer at [macmillan.org.uk/videos](http://macmillan.org.uk/videos)



### Audio

You can listen to information about cancer and order CDs from [macmillan.org.uk/audio](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/audio)



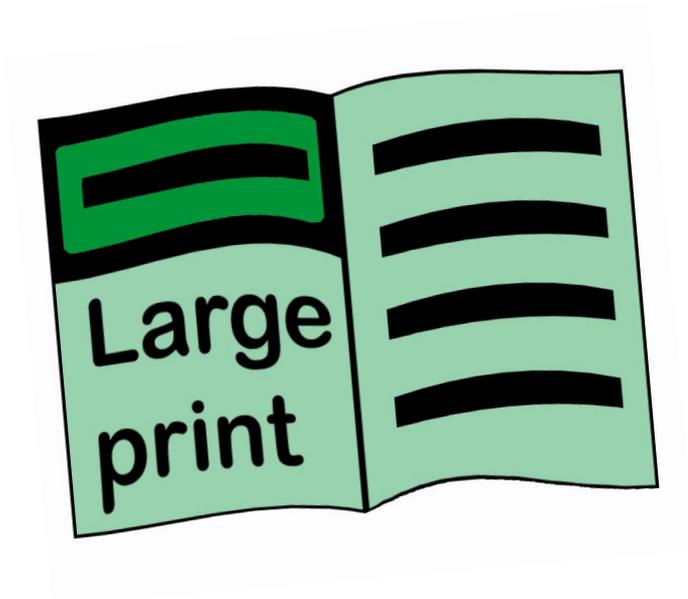
### British Sign Language (BSL)

You can watch information in BSL at [macmillan.org.uk/bsl](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/bsl)



### eBooks

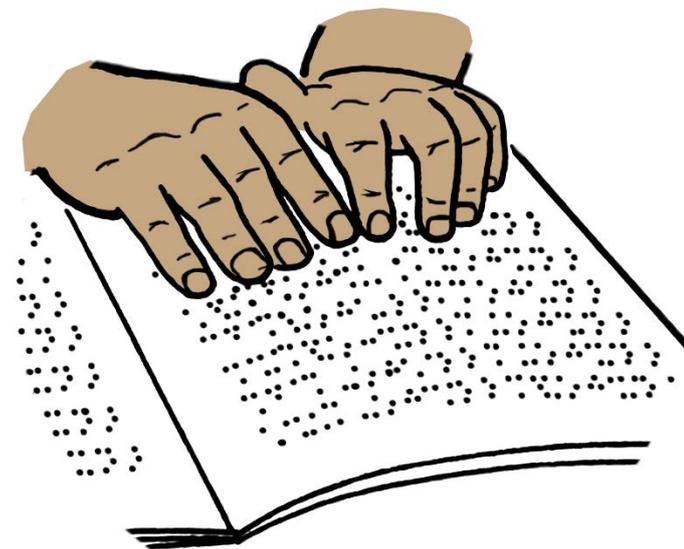
You can get eBooks about cancer from [be.macmillan.org.uk](https://www.be.macmillan.org.uk)



## Large print

Tell us if you need information in large print.

Email: [cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)



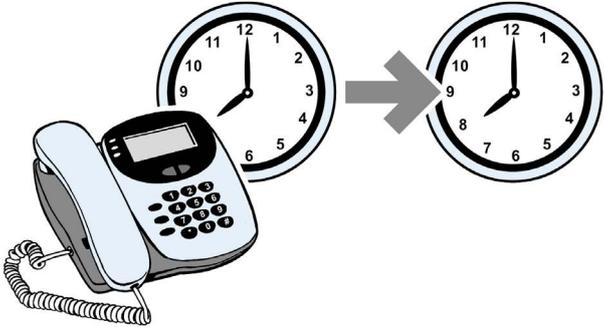
## Braille

Tell us if you need information in Braille.

Email: [cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)

This booklet is about cancer.

It is for anyone who has a learning disability or who finds easier words and pictures helpful. If you have more questions about cancer or would like to talk to us, call the Macmillan Support Line.



- Call us free on:  
**0808 808 00 00**  
7 days a week from 8am to 8pm.



- If you use a textphone, you can call the Macmillan Support Line using the Next Generation Text (NGT) service by dialling  
**18001 0808 808 00 00**



- Or go to the website  
**[macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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