Cancer in your 20s, 30s or 40s?

We get it

shine
CANCER SUPPORT

a guide for those with a new diagnosis

"I was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumour in 2016 and later joined Shine's Great Escape, which I can only describe as life changing. Everyone at Shine has experienced a cancer diagnosis so we get it. We also know that you will have received a bundle of things to read, but please don't throw this out just yet!"

-Neil MacVicar, Network Support Officer at Shine

hello

You have recently been told you have cancer. You may be feeling shocked, anxious, sad or just wanting to get on with it. At a stage in life where you could be building your career, making travel plans, or thinking about having or raising children, your focus is now about to include hospital visits, treatments, and changes to your body. We've been there and we get it. But it doesn't have to completely halt your plans – we can help you deal with your diagnosis and treatment so that you can concentrate on all the great things in your life.

At Shine, we support adults in their 20s, 30s and 40s with a cancer diagnosis. There is never a good time to have cancer, but we know that you face different issues to older or younger people. Work, relationships, mental health, fertility, travelling – we're here to support and guide you through this and more.

Everyone at Shine knows what it's like to hear the words: "you have cancer". We're sorry you have to face this. We've brought together an amazing community so you don't have to face this alone.

We've worked with our community to put together the information we wish we'd been given when we were newly-diagnosed. We host everything from workshops, networking events, conferences and getaways, to online support through Facebook groups, useful videos, and a podcast. There's something to suit everyone's way of connecting.

You can also find lots of information on our website. Please get in touch if you can't find what you're looking for. If we don't have the answer, we can signpost you to the people who do.

We hope to see you soon.

Shine Cancer Support

what we do

Our activities are all designed to bring people together, share experiences, and help you take back control – in a relaxing environment. Whether you're digging deep into a difficult subject or looking for a relaxed trip away, we've got lots of options to suit different lifestyles.

The simplest and most popular ways to connect with us are through our Shine Networks and online groups on Facebook, which you can access via *shinecancersupport.org*

Shine Networks

We have networks across the UK who meet up regularly for chats, coffee, and evenings out. With groups from Devon in the South to Edinburgh in Scotland, we've got a lot of the country covered (and if we don't, please get in touch – we're always keen to move into new places). Our Networks are a great way to meet people with similar experiences outside clinical settings, either in person or online.

Facebook groups

Why not dip into the digital community by joining our Facebook groups? We have a main group for those aged 20-49 with a cancer diagnosis; Shine Lifers for those living with an incurable diagnosis; one for those with early menopause as a result of cancer treatment; dating after cancer; and one for your Plus Ones (this can be a close friend, parent, sibling or partner).

We also have a number of online clubs - a craft club, book club, and movie club - to get your teeth into.

> "As much as I have been well supported by friends and family, sometimes you can only have certain conversations with those who have been there. I wish I had known about Shine when I was first diagnosed."
>
> -Meera, plasmacytoma

workshops & programmes

Workshops

We run a variety of workshops looking at issues such as working after cancer and managing anxiety and loss. Our workshops are generally a mix of expert advice, learning from others, and sharing our experiences. They're always very informal so you don't have to worry about being put on the spot or saying something silly.

Online Programmes

We offer a variety of online activities and programmes. Some of these are informal, one-off events, while others are more established programmes that run for 2 hours a week for up to six weeks. These programmes are a mix of information and expert advice but also you'll also get a chance to chat with other young adults who have had a diagnosis. The programmes are generally open to anyone in our age group though we sometimes run specific programmes for people with different stages or types of cancer. We advertise all of our programmes on our website, with a breakdown of the content and the dates and times.

"Being part of Shine has made me feel part of a community through the most horrific experience. Even now, six years on from my diagnosis, if I need to talk about how I am feeling I turn to my Shiny friends for support. It's not that my 'muggle' friends don't care, it's just that to them I had cancer and I survived – woohoo, congratulations – and they don't want to hear about the chemical menopause side effects, or my growing PTSD around cannulas, or my tamoxifen insomnia!"

-Jen, breast cancer

events & get togethers

Shine Connect

Our annual conference, usually held in London – and online if we can't do it in person – is designed to help you (and your Plus Ones!) meet others and share your experiences, as well as hear from experts from across the cancer field. It's the only UK conference for young adults with a cancer diagnosis and we aim to make sure you have a good time, while learning invaluable info from our speakers and panel discussions. You also get to meet other charities and organisations, enjoy some holistic therapies, and (if we run it in person) we include lunch and snacks!

The Great Escape

If hotel life is more your vibe, we host getaways twice a year, with a mix of workshops, talks and time to hang out. Meet other people your age affected by cancer, explore issues and – most importantly –have fun. Topics covered include managing anxiety, fitness, relationships, and work. It's a packed agenda, but with down time built in so you can chill out and meet new people.

Shine Camp

Our weekend camping trip has been running since 2010 and grown from 17 campers to over 100 people each year. It's huge fun and with no strict agenda, you can get as involved as you like. Our amazing volunteers organise quizzes, orienteering, campfire marshmallows and games for you and your family, or you can simply relax!

"Going on the Great Escape is the best thing I've done since diagnosis – it made me realise that I'm not alone, that there are loads of people going through the same struggles."

-Fran, chronic myeloid leukaemia

online activities

Community Blog

'I've got cancer – where's my casserole?' is just one of the blogs from our great community of writers! Ranging from light-hearted and funny, to top tips, and deeper topics, we cover the whole spectrum. Whether you want to know about people's individual experiences of dating and sex, clinical trials, PTSD, or tips to help with chemotherapy, it's all tagged ready for you to delve in. And if you'd like to share your own perspectives, get in touch! We are always open to new submissions.

Not Your Grandma's Cancer Show podcast

If you're looking for something new to listen to while in hospital or on a walk, our 'Not Your Grandma's Cancer Show' podcast could be for you. Hosted by Tatum de Roeck – a Shine member diagnosed with breast cancer in her 30s – our podcast covers topics such as coping with cancer in lockdown, cancer in the LGBTQI+ community, and living with incurable cancer.

Take a look at our website to find out more and access: *shinecancersupport.org*.

"It's not just any group of people who you could talk to about losing your hair, horrendous bowel side effects, and the horrible isolating effects of illness as a young person, while also laughing and having a pint. When things are difficult I know I've got a whole crew of people around who won't try and fix things, tell me I'm brave or look embarrassed and shuffle off. Sometimes the most powerful thing someone can say when you're struggling is 'me too'."

-Clare, osteosarcoma

it's not just physical

Cancer is a new, unexpected, and unwanted part of your life that doesn't just affect you physically. Your head may be a blur of emotions that you're not used to dealing with. You could feel upbeat one minute and down the next, but the main thing to remember is that there is no right or wrong way to be.

Pressure to be the ideal cancer patient or to react in a certain way – to be strong, resilient and fearless at all times – can be a waste of your energy. It's important to embrace how you feel and do what's right for you without comparing yourself to others. You may feel:

Fear of the treatment side effects, your future, for your children, or of the unknown.

Anger at your diagnosis. You may wonder 'why me?' or be annoyed at people around you for continuing their lives as normal.

Guilt because you feel, or someone has made you feel, that your lifestyle is responsible for your diagnosis - or you may feel guilty for how cancer is impacting your family or friends.

Sadness for your loss of health or the future ahead. You may feel down and lack energy, feel tired, or not want to eat.

Anxiety about the hospital stays, treatment side effects, and the uncertainties. Feeling on edge or worried to the point you can't relax.

Isolated from your friends, family, or the outside world. You may be in hospital a lot, friends may become distant, or you may not be involved in plans.

Grief for your diagnosis and the changes to your body. It's no overstatement to say that having cancer changes your life: your focus shifts, and this can cause grief for your old life.

Fatigue because of mental overload or the treatment, and you may not feel up to your day-to-day tasks.

You may feel one, all, or none of these, and they may come and go, or you may feel positive, full of energy, and ready to take on the next stage. However you feel, you're not alone.

"You only hear about people with cancer who have run marathons or done 100-mile charity bike rides, while I struggled to even get out of bed. It can be hard feeling like you're not doing it right. But you have to let go of that comparison as cancer affects everyone differently."

-Lisa, Hodgkin lymphoma

"Having cancer is like being on a rollercoaster blindfolded. You don't know how you will feel from one day to the next and nothing prepares you for the ups and downs."
-Ewan, sarcoma

"Before I joined Shine, I had feelings of loneliness, isolation and uncertainty. However, now I feel I am not alone with these feelings and it's OK to feel down, it's OK to cry, and it's normal to feel guilt around cancer."
-Naveed, Erdheim Chester disease

"Then he said the words, 'it's a rare type and there is no cure' and time stopped. That was not meant to happen. I was meant to have a fighting chance, but that had been taken away from me. I was totally devastated and numb."
-Louise, kidney cancer

ways to support your mental health

These are some of the tactics the Shine team and our community use to help support our mental wellbeing during tough times. You may want to try out a few things to discover what works best for you.

Recognise your feelings

Don't try to push your feelings down to 'move forward and get on with it'. Allow yourself space to experience the emotions of living with cancer. If you can identify how you are feeling, you can take steps to make yourself feel a little lighter.

Talk to someone

No matter how big or small the issue is, talking to someone you trust could be the key to releasing some of the mental weight that has built up in your head. That could mean talking to other people who have cancer, a close friend or family member, therapist, or a member of your spiritual community - do what feels right for you. You can also connect with thousands of others though our different services.

Get informed

Some fears about cancer are based on TV, anecdotes, or simply the wrong information. Most people feel better when they learn the facts. Finding out the answers to your concerns from reliable sources can help you to be an active partner in your care and could help you to feel less afraid.

Write down your thoughts

Start a journal as an outlet for your daily emotions and you may even see a pattern for your low days. Some people recommend a morning gratitude journal to remind themselves of the positives in their lives.

Embrace relaxation techniques

Slow down and calm your mind with meditation, yoga, breathing techniques, a bath, a hot chocolate, painting, napping - whatever works for you. Establishing these small self-care rituals around your treatment could provide you with a much-needed pause to support your mental healing.

Be realistic

Keeping up with responsibilities can be hard, so be realistic about what you can manage and draw on those around you for support. What is essential and what can wait or be cancelled? We can be guilty of wanting to achieve all the time, but you can't do everything. Remember that many people may offer help but be unsure of what they can do. If you can provide them with specific actions (e.g. doing your grocery shop or helping to clean your house), you may feel relieved and they will feel useful.

Control the things you can

It's easy to feel like everything is happening to you and you have no choices. However, asking your consultant questions that are important to you, making positive changes to your lifestyle, or keeping a calendar, are small things that can provide structure and help you to feel empowered.

Get professional help

Charities such as *Mental Health Foundation*, *Mind* and *Maggie's* offer one-to-one therapy or group activities. Shine's huge range of activities, including peer support groups can also be helpful. If you have consistently low feelings or you feel you're losing hope for the future, these could be symptoms of depression and you should speak to your clinical nurse specialist or GP.

"I had been skiing three weeks previously, I had never smoked, had always done loads of exercise and I have always eaten reasonably well, so it was a shock. I was pretty terrified. I felt a mixture of numbness and denial. From 'this can't be happening to me – it will surely all be a mistake', to 'it will all be fine', and then 'I'm probably going to die from this'."

-Paul, acute myeloid leukaemia

"Through mindfulness, I have learned to let negative experiences/ emotions, feelings, health situations be welcomed and embraced."

-Mark, bowel cancer

"The Break Out programme introduced me to a fantastic group of peers and provided a series of useful conversation starters that allowed us all to share our experiences, fears, frustrations and a surprising amount of laughs too. Until I met the group, I don't think I realised how much I needed this."

-Jen, acute myeloid leukaemia

cancer & relationships

Once you have had a moment to digest your diagnosis, you may start to worry about how you are going to tell people. Your parents, children, friends, neighbours or colleagues will all be impacted in different ways and some relationships will become strengthened, whereas others may be strained or disappear completely.

Preparing for difficult conversations

Take your time: While you may need to tell some people, such as employers, relatively soon, take your time to gather the information and energy you need.

Decide your communication methods: You may wish to tell people in person, but it is up to you! An email, text, Instagram post, or a message via a friend, could take less emotional energy and allow you to tell more people at once.

Share on your own terms: Decide how much information you want to share and be clear about your boundaries. You don't need to share any information at all if you don't want to.

Practice: It can be useful to practice a difficult conversation in advance, either with a trusted friend or family member, or even in the mirror. If you can anticipate what you'll find difficult, practicing can help you to work out ways around it.

Guide people: Let people know what you need from them, whether it's to talk about your feelings, help with a specific task, or not to discuss it at all. People react well to guidance.

Don't take on their emotions: People will react differently! They may get upset, show shock, try to be positive, or may not even respond at all. They may even say something insensitive or hurtful. Try not to take on other people's emotional responses and remain focused on looking after yourself.

Reserve your energy: Don't feel guilty if you don't have energy to respond to messages. Perhaps even create copy-and-paste responses or tell people you will get in touch when you feel up to it.

Telling children: Telling children about a cancer diagnosis is hard. But it's best to be honest with them, even if they don't fully understand. Many children can sense when something's wrong, and may make up their own stories to fill in any blanks. While you may be worried about how they'll respond, their responses may surprise you. *Fruitfly Collective* provide kits to support discussions with children of different ages.

How this can affect your relationships

Some people will be amazing, supportive pillars of strength. They will say the right things to help you through those difficult moments and help out where they can. However, some may withdraw from you, or say something insensitive, and this can be hard. You may be left out of plans or not receive the visits you had expected. However, this is often because people feel awkward or distressed. Try not to take it personally.

People may stop telling you their problems because they think your problems are worse, which could make you feel isolated. Remember that this often comes from a good place, but do tell people if you want to know their gossip!

Sometimes a relationship with a partner is strengthened, but they may be distressed or feel anxious. It can help to talk openly about your fears and what impact cancer and its treatment has on both of you. *Shine Plus Ones* can be a useful source of support for a partner.

"Quite a few people disappeared, and never contacted me – people I was in contact with a lot before, or had worked with closely in the past. I know now that this is a common experience – a lot of people are scared, don't know what to say, don't want to say the wrong thing, or have their own issues and experiences going on. "

-Lauren, cervical cancer

cancer & relationships

Dating

If you're single when you're diagnosed with cancer it can be difficult, particularly if you live alone and are used to being independent. If you are dating, however, there is no reason why you have to stop! As with any social situation, you get to make the decision on how, why and when you tell someone about your diagnosis. You may even feel like you've changed your outlook on relationships since your diagnosis, and this can add a new dimension to what you want from life and who you want to share it with. Just don't feel pressured to do anything you don't want to do, and wait until you feel good physically and mentally.

You can find more here: shinecancersupport.org/information/dating/

Sex

Cancer treatment could cause changes to your physical and emotional self, which can have a negative impact on your body image, physical ability to give and receive pleasure, (erectile difficulties or sexual pain), or desire or energy to have sex. This can be distressing and embarrassing, and may cause problems whether you're in a long-term relationship or not.

If you feel able, talk to your treatment team and/or your GP about your worries – there is nothing they haven't heard before. They can offer support or medication, or point you to other services, depending on the issue.

You can find more here: shinecancersupport.org/information/sex/

"Starting a new relationship was really scary for me as I struggled to come to terms with my post-surgery and menopausal body and there have been some pretty embarrassing/awkward/hilarious moments. Over time, I am coming to terms with being childless and take the attitude that we can look at alternative parenting options if life takes us in that direction."

-Corinne, cervical cancer,

living with cancer

Work and study

Continuing with work or study may be the last thing on your mind right now, but when you feel ready you should let your manager, tutor or HR team know about your diagnosis and treatment. We all have different experiences with treatment and the impact it has on our ability to be productive. Some people are able to maintain a routine and a sense of normality, whereas others may feel too tired, in pain, numb, or nauseous to work. Once you've been diagnosed with cancer you're covered by the Equality Act and considered disabled (whether you consider yourself disabled or not!). Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to support you, including lighter duties, flexible hours, and time off to attend appointments.

You can find more here: shinecancersupport.org/information/work/

Fertility

Your main concern right now is probably getting started with treatment. But some treatments, such as chemotherapy and hormone therapy, can reduce your fertility. For women, treatment could cause damage to the eggs, womb, cervix or hormone production, or start an early menopause, and for men, it could be that your sperm production slows down or stops, or you could have problems maintaining an erection.

If having a child in the future is important to you, you should speak to your consultant about fertility preservation before your treatment starts. Make sure to speak with them to understand all the changes in your body, the long-term effects of treatment, and the options available to you.

You can find more here: shinecancersupport.org/information/fertility/

Early menopause

Menopause usually occurs in women in their 40s and 50s, when your ovaries stop producing hormones and your periods eventually stop, meaning you can no longer become pregnant. Some cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, hormone therapy and radiotherapy to the pelvis, can cause an early or temporary menopause. As a result, you may experience hot flushes, difficulty sleeping, aches and pains, anxiety, vaginal dryness, and poor concentration.

We get that this can be overwhelming, especially alongside dealing with cancer treatment and its side effects. Talk to your doctor to find out how likely this is to happen to you and how you can prepare. If you experience early menopause, your doctor may be able to prescribe drugs and treatments, such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to ease symptoms, antidepressants to reduce hot flushes, or vaginal oestrogen to help with dryness. Some people also find complementary therapies help, such as acupuncture, hypnosis and breathing techniques.

You can also join our Shine Cancer Support Facebook group – Menopause After Cancer

Money

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. You may have financial commitments such as rent, a mortgage, and utility bills that can be a struggle if you have to stop working. It is worth contacting your service providers to see if they can reduce costs or offer delayed payments in light of a diagnosis.

If you are concerned about the financial implications of your cancer treatment, you can speak to a benefits advisor through organisations including *Maggie's* or *Macmillan*. You should also check out the *Willow Foundation*, *Osborne Trust* and *Something to Look Forward to* help with special treats.

Looking after children

Being a parent can be hard work at the best of times and now it could become even more physically and emotionally exhausting. Start by looking at your daily routine and see where you could ask for help or drop tasks. It is important to accept that you do not have the time or energy for everything.

- Speak to your consultant about things such as timing appointments to work with childcare.
- If you are working or studying, see what support your employer or tutor can provide in terms of flexible working.
- Talk to your partner about them taking on more or different responsibilities, if possible.
- Ask family and friends for help with school drop-offs, preparing meals, or cleaning.
- Contact community groups including faith groups, charities or schools, as there may be people who can visit your home to help with childcare, or assist with before or after-school care.
- Speak to your child's school about what's happening. They may have in-school support available, or be able to provide assistance for before or after school activities.

Travel

Do you have a holiday booked and still want to go? People with cancer are allowed to have fun too! As long as your consultant is happy and you feel up to it, you should still go. One thing to bear in mind is that your trip could, unfortunately, get more expensive once you start looking for travel insurance.

However, a number of insurers now use medical screening programmes which more accurately assess the risk, meaning that premiums are lower. One system is the Protectif Medical Risk Rating, used by a number of different companies, which asks relevant questions on your medical condition to assess your individual risk effectively.

It's important to understand that if you don't get cover for your cancer, it is not just cancer that you are excluding: it's anything that could be attributed to the cancer or the treatment of it.

Find out more about travel insurance here: shinecancersupport.org/information/travel-insurance/

I wish I'd asked

You're listening to your consultant, trying to process words like cytology, carcinoma and chemotherapy, and you get home to realise you don't have the answers to things that you actually care about. Yes, they are the medical experts, but this is about your body, your treatment, and your future. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Remember that you don't need to wait for your next appointment either; you can call your consultant team in between. You can also ask to record your consultations and request for someone to join you in person, by video, or by phone.

We've listed some questions you may want to ask, direct from the Shine community. Don't feel you need to ask them all! We have a notes page section at the end where you may want to write down your own:

Has my case been discussed at the multidisciplinary team meeting (MDT) and were any other treatment options discussed? It is standard within the NHS that all newly diagnosed cancer cases are discussed by an MDT of professionals, who should look at multiple different approaches.

Who is part of my cancer team and what do they do? Your team could include surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, nurses, dieticians, and others, who will each have a specific and vital role.

Who is my key worker and how can I get hold of them? You should be allocated a 'key worker' – this will most often be a clinical nurse specialist. They can be invaluable in helping you navigate what is happening before, during, and after a consultation.

What are the benefits and risks of each treatment option? Find out if it is to eliminate the cancer, make you feel better, or both. It may also be worth asking what happens if you choose to do nothing at this particular time.

What existing/new supplements or therapies are available? Some supplements may be helpful for providing energy and helping your body to repair, particularly if you have low levels of nutrients.

What are the common side effects? Cancer treatment is tough, but by knowing the potential side effects, you can be prepared and look into ways of dealing with it.

Which hospital will I be treated at? This will depend on the nearest hospital with the best facilities for your illness, and the consultant you were referred to by your family doctor.

Is there a genetic link to this type of cancer? You may wish to know this so you can ask your family members to get tested.

Where can I get more information or support? Save yourself from falling down an overwhelming Google rabbit hole, by ensuring you get links to reputable and reliable information.

Can you suggest a consultant who could offer a second opinion? Most doctors will understand the value of a second opinion and can often recommend someone you can ask to get the ball rolling.

Are there any clinical trials for my situation in this hospital? There could be a new treatment, or an existing treatment used in a different way, available through a clinical trial. If there are no local trials then looking at the *National Cancer Research Institute* website and their Portfolio Maps for a specific cancer will show what important questions investigators have about treating cancer.

Will this impact my fertility and, if so, can I be referred to a fertility specialist?

It may not be something on your mind now, but it's important to have this discussion before your treatment starts.

Will you send me copies of letters you send to my GP? You are entitled to copies of any letters, results and reports about you – should you wish.

Please can I take a break? These conversations can be stressful and overwhelming. You're entitled to take a break or ask for another appointment once you have had time to process the information.

I take these nutritional supplements/herbal remedies. Will they interact with my treatment? You may be thinking about starting new supplements or herbal remedies. It's always worth letting your medical team know if you already take these, or are thinking of taking them, as they can affect the way that some treatments works.

I have additional needs; how can I get extra support? If you are disabled or have additional needs, the team may be able to make accommodations in consultations, equipment or procedures, and you may be eligible for additional benefits.

"I felt like someone had sucked the air out of the room. I had a new label and a million questions. I remember my heart racing, not hearing everything the doctor said but zoning in on the fact that it was 'dangerous but treatable'. "

-Clare, osteosarcoma

tips from our community

We spoke with the Shine community about what they wish they had known when they were diagnosed with cancer, and any top tips to help get through treatment and beyond.

Amy, cervical cancer: You don't have to be strong all the time. It's OK to be sad and have days when you feel low. Just know that they will pass, and roll with it. Be honest with how you feel and accept help and support.

Neil, lymphoblastic leukaemia: Breathe. I know you want to run, but you need to walk. Especially for the first year of intense chemotherapy. You want to climb every mountain in your life, set the world alight. You need to recover first.

Paul, acute myeloid leukaemia: Work out what your coping mechanisms are and then rely on them. Don't be afraid to admit how hard the journey is. Take pleasure in the small and big wins. There is wisdom all around you – listen for it.

Katy, breast cancer: Take things one day at a time. This may turn into managing things second by second, but you will find a way to come around. You will find a pattern about how you feel through treatment. Book things to do and if you can't make them, then that's OK – but if you can, that's a bonus.

Soledad, breast cancer: I'd say to take part in social activities. They may require a bit of effort in the beginning but they can really help in making friends with people in similar situations.

Lisa, breast cancer: Before starting a conversation about your cancer, try to have it clear in your mind what you do or do not want to talk about. That way you can have a response ready if something comes up and you'd rather not discuss it.

Rebecca, bladder cancer:
You are your own best advocate. Ask all of the questions, follow up all of your hunches and be a bit more demanding to make sure that no stone is left unturned!

Stephen, testicular cancer:
Do some (very careful) Googling! I'd been so scared I'd immediately find a terrifying prognosis, I kept off the medical half of the internet altogether and stuck only with the information given to me by the NHS staff I encountered. But if I'd been selective with what I'd searched, I might just have found Shine earlier to help support me that little bit more through my experience.

Alison, breast cancer:
Get organised! Make a folder for letters and keep a notebook or diary to hand for all the cancer-related admin that comes up. In the early days, all the tests and scans can be overwhelming but a diary can help you feel more in control of the mayhem!

Eleanor, Hodgkin lymphoma:
Let your emotions be as they come: they aren't wrong or right, they can't be compared to someone else's. They are yours and they are valid.

Jo, breast cancer:
I kept a chemo side effect diary so that I could look back after sessions and remind myself that feeling rough wouldn't last forever. It helped me to see, for example, that I might feel sick on day three or four, but that things would soon pick up again.

useful charities and organisations

Maggie's provide calming centres beside major cancer hospitals across the UK. They offer advice, workshops, courses, one-to-one and group support to help people change the way they live with cancer.

maggies.org

Live Through This support, educate and advocate for the LGBTQI+ community. You often hear that cancer can affect anyone but don't see everyone accommodated in the support available. This is why they provide opportunities for LGBTQI+ people affected by cancer to meet and share their experiences.

livethroughthis.co.uk

Something To Look Forward To offer people with cancer and their families access to a variety of free 'gifts' donated by companies and individuals. These include free breaks in holiday cottages; restaurant meals; theatre tickets; beauty treatments, and tickets for attractions.

somethingtolookforwardto.org.uk

Willow Foundation works with seriously ill young adults aged 16 to 40 to fulfil uplifting and unforgettable Special Days. For some, their Special Day is the opportunity to return some normality to their lives. For others, it is the last chance to fulfil a dream. But for all, at what is the most difficult of times, a Special Day can lift spirits, reunify families, and be a source of strength when it's needed most.

willowfoundation.org.uk

Cancer Care Map is an online directory that helps people find cancer care and support services in their local area. People with cancer, their friends and family can either search for a service or can browse the types of services available.

cancercaremap.org

Fruitfly Collective provide Cancer Clouds Kits to support discussions around cancer between carers, parents, and children of different ages. Each kit contains an age-appropriate set of tools designed to help children or young people to understand what cancer is, the treatments given, and the side effects they may cause.

fruitflycollective.com/cancer-cloud-kits

notes

notes

keep in touch

Thank you for reading our booklet for young people who have recently been diagnosed with cancer. We hope it's offered some clarity and reassurance while navigating this next stage of your life.

We know that you will still have questions about what your treatment entails, the impact on your physical and emotional health, and how you will manage the treatment side effects. This varies so much between people, and depends on the type of cancer you have, and your treatment. We suggest you start by asking your medical team any questions you have, as they understand your personal situation the most.

The Shine community is here for you when you feel ready to join a supportive Facebook group, a workshop, or get-together, or simply check out our blogs. It's a chance to connect with people your age with shared experiences, to ask questions without judgement, and give each other a boost if times get tough. We have a lot of fun too!

Find out more and keep in touch at *shinecancersupport.org*

We'd love to meet you!

To find out more information, check out our website, follow us on social media, or drop us an email.

hi@shinecancersupport.org

shinecancersupport.org

shinecancersupport

shinecancersupport

@ShineCancerSupp

shine-cancer-support

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