

Living with Mesothelioma - A Quick Guide



Contents

This is a brief summary of the information on 'Living with mesothelioma' from CancerHelp UK. You will find more detailed information on the website.

In this information there are sections on

- Coping with mesothelioma
- Living with advanced cancer
- Questions for your doctor
- Mesothelioma organisations

Coping with mesothelioma

It can be very difficult coping with a diagnosis of cancer, both practically and emotionally. You are likely to be feeling very confused and upset at first.

Mesothelioma is often diagnosed at quite an advanced stage. As well as coping with your diagnosis, you may be trying to cope with the news that your cancer is very difficult to treat and unlikely to be curable.

As well as coping with the fear and anxiety that a diagnosis of cancer brings, you have to work out how to manage practically. There may be money matters to sort out. Who do you tell you have cancer? There may be children or grandchildren to consider.

The 'coping with cancer' section of CancerHelp UK contains lots of information you may find helpful. There are sections on

- Your feelings
- Talking to people: who and what to tell
- Talking to children
- How you can help yourself
- Who else can help you
- Sick pay and benefits: coping financially

Living with advanced cancer

Finding out that you have been diagnosed with an advanced cancer, or that your cancer has come back, can be devastating. Having advanced cancer means your cancer cannot be cured, but there are treatments available that can slow your cancer down. You will need to talk very carefully to your own specialist to understand what the diagnosis means for you, what treatment is available, and how treatment may help you.

It is important that you feel as well as you possibly can. If you haven't already been referred, ask your hospital doctor or GP about a specialist palliative care team. Macmillan nurses can help control your cancer symptoms and improve the quality of your life. If you are having any physical difficulties in coping at home your Macmillan nurse or a district nurse can talk



to you about ways you may cope more easily.

If you are having problems with breathlessness, there is information on coping with this in the 'living with lung cancer' section of CancerHelp UK. And the 'death and dying' section has information about coping with cancer symptoms, strong emotions and other difficulties that you may have during the last few months of life. There is also information for carers, friends and relatives.

What to ask your doctor about living with mesothelioma

- How long will it take me to get over my treatment?
- What precautions will I have to take while I am recovering?
- What practical help is available?
- Can I go back to work?
- Can I take up my usual hobbies and sports again?
- Can I go abroad on holiday?
- Can I drink alcohol?
- My partner and I would like to see a counsellor. Can you put us in touch with someone? How much will this cost?
- Can you help me with claiming compensation for my illness from my former employers?

Mesothelioma organisations

Cancer Research UK
Main website: www.cancerresearchuk.org

Patient information website:
<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>
Cancer Information Nurses phone: 0808 800 4040

British Lung Foundation
Phone: 08458 50 50 20 (Helpline Mon-Fri 10.00am - 6.00pm)
Website: <http://www.lunguk.org/>

Mesothelioma UK
Website: www.mesothelioma.uk.com/
Helpline: 0800 169 2409

More information

For more information about mesothelioma, visit our website
<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. You can view or print the information in a larger size if you need to.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on **0808 800 4040**
9am till 5pm Monday to Friday

Adapted from Cancer Research UK's Patient Information Website CancerHelp UK in December 2010. CancerHelp UK is not designed to provide medical advice or professional services and is intended to be for educational use only. The information provided through CancerHelp UK and our nurse team is not a substitute for professional care and should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. If you have, or suspect you may have, a health problem you should consult your doctor. © Cancer Research UK 2010. Cancer Research UK is registered charity in England and Wales (1089464) and in Scotland (SC041666).