

# Living with Oesophageal Cancer - A Quick Guide



## Contents

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

In this information there are sections on

- Coping with oesophageal cancer
- Diet after oesophageal cancer
- Questions for your doctor
- Oesophageal cancer organisations

## Coping with oesophageal cancer

It can be very difficult coping with a diagnosis of cancer both practically and emotionally. You may feel very upset and confused at first. 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
- Sex and sexuality
- Coping financially

## Diet after oesophageal cancer

Having cancer of the food pipe (oesophagus) will affect your eating and drinking habits, whatever your stage or treatment. Many people with oesophageal cancer find it hard to eat well because they have difficulty swallowing. However it is important to eat well to ensure you are getting enough calories and protein to control weight loss and maintain strength.

Find out more information on diet after oesophageal cancer on CancerHelp UK. It includes details on diet after surgery, diet when swallowing is difficult, and ways to boost your calorie content if you need building up.

## Other help

With everyday difficulties such as dietary problems, it often helps to get advice from people who are in the same situation as you. Try contacting a support group or one of the oesophageal cancer organisations.

to spot which foods cause which symptoms.



It can help to keep a food diary if you are having problems that you think are related to your diet. Take a small notebook and draw a line down the centre of each page. Write down what you eat and when on the left of the page. Write down any symptoms you get and when on the other side of the page. After a few days, you may be able to spot which foods cause which symptoms.

### What to ask your doctor about living with oesophageal cancer

- How will my treatment affect me?
- Will I ever get back to normal, or will I have some long term effects?
- If I have difficulty eating, who can I go to for help?
- Will I need a special diet?
- Is there anything I shouldn't eat?
- Will I need any extra vitamins or other diet supplements?
- How do I see a dietician?
- Will I be able to go back to work?
- Where can I get help with claiming benefits and grants?
- What practical help is available?
- Why did this happen to me?
- Are my children at risk of getting cancer of the oesophagus?
- Where can I get help dealing with my feelings?
- Can you refer me for counselling?
- Do I have to pay for counselling?
- Could you refer me to a Macmillan nurse?

### Oesophageal cancer organisations

Cancer Research UK  
 Main website: [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)  
 Patient information website:  
<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>  
 Nurses phone: 020 7061 8355

Oesophageal Patients' Association  
 Tel: 0121 704 9860  
 Website: [www.opa.org.uk](http://www.opa.org.uk)  
 Email: [enquiries@opa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@opa.org.uk)

CORE  
 Tel: 020 7486 0341  
 Website: [www.corecharity.org.uk](http://www.corecharity.org.uk)  
 Email: [info@corecharity.org.uk](mailto:info@corecharity.org.uk)

The Barrett's Oesophagus Campaign  
 Telephone: 020 7472 6223  
 email: [info@barrettscampaign.org.uk](mailto:info@barrettscampaign.org.uk)  
 website: [www.barrettscampaign.org.uk](http://www.barrettscampaign.org.uk)

Ochre  
 Telephone: 0800 822 3370  
 Email: [committee@ochrecharity.co.uk](mailto:committee@ochrecharity.co.uk)  
 Website: [www.ochre-charity.co.uk](http://www.ochre-charity.co.uk)



## More information

For more information about oesophageal cancer, 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 cancer 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

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Adapted from Cancer Research UK's Patient Information Website CancerHelp UK in November 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 a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464) and in Scotland (SC041666).