

Accessing Support: Bowel Cancer

Bowel cancer can bring about various emotional challenges and it is important to look after your mental health as you navigate life with your diagnosis. Below are some resources aimed at enhancing your understanding of bowel cancer and how other patients have dealt with the associated practical and emotional challenges. You might quite understandably wish to receive some support at times. For some people family and friends can be supportive, but you might also wish to contact one of the many organisations/services that can provide information or support to those with bowel cancer. It is important to recognise that life with bowel cancer can be challenging at times, and to allow yourself to seek help if you feel you need it.



Below is a list of organisations who may be able to offer you some support, as well as some resources that you may find helpful to read/listen to. The range and quality of services/support available from such organisations may vary. This list has been gathered as signposting only, and The Royal Marsden cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by an organisation listed or the quality of their services.

If you have any questions or would like further advice/guidance about where to seek specialist help in your local area, you can speak with a member of your Royal Marsden treatment team or the Adult Psychological Support Service.

Bowel Cancer UK – Living with and beyond bowel cancer

A collection of information including practical resources on topics such as: managing side effects, diet, and work, money, and travel. It also provides resources that can be useful in supporting emotional and physical wellbeing. Bowel Cancer UK also has ‘Support for You’ section of their website which includes an online forum, an ‘Ask the Nurse’ service where you can bring specific queries to nurses, and real-life patient stories that you might find insightful and inspiring.

Website link: <https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/about-bowel-cancer/living-with-and-beyond-bowel-cancer/>

Colostomy UK – A-Z List of Factsheets and Information Booklets

This website has downloadable information covering practical concerns around living with a stoma, such as information on types of bags, travel advice, and guidance on stoma-related pain and discomfort. Colostomy UK also offers a free helpline (**0800 328 4257**) offering experience-based practical and emotional support from trained volunteers living with a stoma, for anyone with a stoma. They also run a private Facebook support group, and a befriending service. Additionally, they offer Active Ostomate Sessions, aimed to support



wellbeing and confidence in individuals, and deliver training, webinars and workshops in stoma awareness and care. You might also wish to see the regularly maintained nationwide network of support group listings on their website or use the 'live chat' function.

Website link: <https://www.colostomyuk.org/information/a-z-list/>

Hollister – one-to-one counselling

A company that manufactures ostomy care products. They offer one-to-one counselling to stoma patients. If this is something you would be interested in, let your RMH care team know and they can refer you to Hollister's services.

Website link: <https://www.securestart.co.uk/>

Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Association

This association offers information and support to individuals who have had an ileostomy or are living with an internal pouch. They offer [one-to-one support](#), where you can talk to volunteers who have been through surgery themselves and have been living with an ileostomy or internal pouch for at least 18 months.

Website link: <https://iasupport.org/>

Look Good Feel Better

This charity aims to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of individuals affected by cancer through free online and in-person workshops, and video resources. The underlying principle of this organisation is that, through self-care and taking care of one's appearance, it is possible to improve your self-confidence following physical changes due to cancer. They have materials tailored to men, women and teenagers, and work to assist people of all skin colours, ages, and cancer variations. Workshops include skincare, nailcare, grooming, oral care, shaving, hair loss and wigs, make-up, and advice on nutrition and fitness. They work with people up to one year post active cancer treatment. They also run the [HeadWrappers Service](#), offering a range of workshops and classes that provide practical advice on caring for your scalp and hair before, during and after cancer treatment. They also demonstrate useful scarf tying techniques, provide complimentary gift bags with headwear, and also help people connect with each other in a welcoming and safe space.

Website link: <https://lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk/>

Macmillan – Bowel Cancer Booklet

A booklet containing information on bowel cancer and its treatment. The booklet shares suggestions for managing the challenging feelings which sometimes arise, and how Macmillan can support you through your journey with bowel cancer.

Website link: [Bowel cancer \(including rectal cancer and colon cancer\) | Macmillan Cancer Support](#)



Macmillan – Bowel changes after cancer treatment

This site offers guidance about how bowel function can change after different cancer operations and gives some suggestions for managing specific challenges following treatment.

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/bowel-cancer/managing-bowel-changes-after-treatment>

Other APSS Information and Resources

The Adult Psychological Support Service has a range of signposting information sheets on topics such as: coping at different stages of the cancer pathway, supporting your physical and emotional wellbeing, relationships, and information specific to certain types of cancer.

You can view the signposting information sheets on The Royal Marsden's [Patient Information Library](#) and the [Adult Psychological Support Service Website](#) (under 'Further information and resources'). You can also request a copy of these by emailing Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephoning **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton).

Additional support services

Cancer Care Map

An online database of cancer support services. You can search by postcode or by particular themes e.g. cancer type.

Website link: <https://www.cancercaremap.org/>

Maggie's Cancer Centres

Cancer care centres with multiple locations, including The Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton and Charing Cross Hospital, West London. Workshops, groups, information and one-to-one counselling available.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/>

Phone number: **0300 123 1801**

NHS Talking Therapies

NHS website to help you find your local psychological talking therapies service based on your GP address. Your local NHS talking therapies service can be helpful if you would like psychological support for cancer when you are no longer regularly coming in for appointments at The Royal Marsden, as well as for concerns unrelated to cancer or that predated your cancer and have become worse due to it.

Website link: [Find NHS talking therapies for anxiety and depression - NHS](#)

If you need any specialist and personalised advice about your cancer treatment, symptoms or side effects, please contact The Royal Marsden Hotline. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **020 8915 6899**.



The Royal Marsden's Adult Psychological Support Service offers short-term, cancer-specific psychological and psychiatric support. You can either self-refer or ask somebody in your Royal Marsden healthcare team to refer you. For more information, visit [Adult Psychological Support Service | The Royal Marsden](#). Alternatively, contact us directly on **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea), **020 8661 3006** (Sutton), or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk.



If you have ideas for other signposting or information sheets, or if you would like to be involved in working with APSS to improve the service we offer, please scan the QR code to see more about our patient and public involvement, or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephone **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton) with your ideas.

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