

Accessing Support: Sleep Disturbances

Getting consistent sleep is important for your physical and mental wellbeing. Unfortunately, for some people receiving a cancer diagnosis or going through treatment can disturb sleep, adding another layer of complexity to what can already be a challenging time. As life with cancer be stressful, and cancer treatment often causes physical changes it is perhaps unsurprising that sleep might be disturbed. Nonetheless, you may wish to try out some strategies to help you get to sleep more easily, or improve the quality of your sleep.



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.

Healthline - 15 Tips for More Restful Sleep

A list of 15 practical tips for getting a better night sleep. The articles supports its recommendations from scientific journals on sleep.

Website link: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/17-tips-to-sleep-better>

Macmillan - Information and Support Page for Cancer-Related Insomnia

Lists the symptoms, causes, and potential treatment routes (medical, therapeutic, and self-help).

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/impacts-of-cancer/trouble-sleeping>



Maggie's - 'Sleep and cancer'

A guide to the types of sleep disturbances that can arise due to cancer and treatment, and some suggestions with how these can be managed. This site also contains links to other resources on cancer and sleep.

Website Link: <https://www.maggies.org/cancer-support/managing-symptoms-and-side-effects/sleep-and-cancer/>

NHS Every Mind Matters – How to fall asleep faster and sleep better

The NHS guide to falling asleep, which includes some helpful relaxation and mindfulness exercises and educational videos.

Website link: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep/>

The Royal Marsden - "Coping with sleep difficulties"

This educational PDF document prepared by The Royal Marsden's Adult Psychological Support Service outlines some strategies which you might wish to try out in order to manage cancer-related sleep difficulties.

Website link: <https://patientinfolibrary.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/coping-sleep-difficulties?return-url=https%3A%2F%2Fpatientinfolibrary.royalmarsden.nhs.uk%2Fsearch%3Fkeys%3Dsleep>

The Sleep Charity

This UK charity supports individuals having issues with their sleep. Their site has an adult sleep eBook to provide you knowledge of what might be behind your disturbances and how you might address them.

Website link: <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/adults/>

There is also the National Sleep Helpline: **03303 530 541** (Mon/Tue/Thu 7-9pm or Mon/Wed 9-11am). This is run by a team of sleep advisors who can confidentially and non-judgementally listen to your issues and offer practical solutions.

Sleep Foundation – Relaxation Exercises to Help Fall Asleep

This site outlines relaxation, breathing, visualisation and progressive muscle relaxation exercises that you may wish to attempt if you are struggling to fall asleep.

Website link: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene/relaxation-exercises-to-help-fall-asleep>



“Sleep Well” – Just One Thing with Michael Mosley (Podcast)

This podcast series, narrated by Dr. Michael Mosley, uses scientifically proven techniques that may help with problems in sleeping.

Podcast Link: [Just One Thing - with Michael Mosley - Sleep Well - with Michael Mosley - Sleep Well - Ep 4: Warm up to cool down - BBC Sounds](#)

Trekstock Talks - "Anxiety and Insomnia"

Led by a clinical psychologist and cancer patient, this 4-minute video discusses the link between anxiety and insomnia. It provides practical advice for managing anxiety before sleep, which may help to reduce restlessness.

Website link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRl5xmg-4h4&list=PLIMZ3Ynf93cMP8ouKAMTmp-EyEGrvv61R&index=7>

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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