easy
read

Cancer and covid

This booklet is about covid if you have cancer. Covid is also called covid-19 or coronavirus.

You can learn what you can do to protect yourself from covid if you have cancer. You can also learn about the vaccine.

If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.

What is covid?
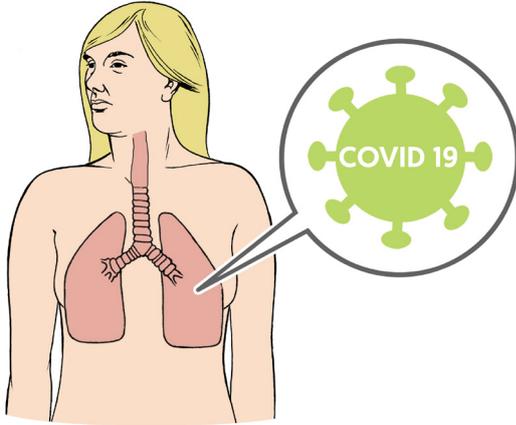
**Covid** is a virus that can affect your lungs or other parts of your body.
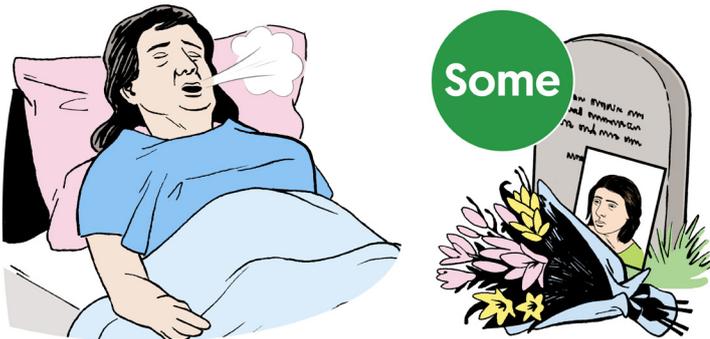
Covid can make some people very unwell. Some people die from it.

For more information about covid visit:

macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus

What if I have cancer?
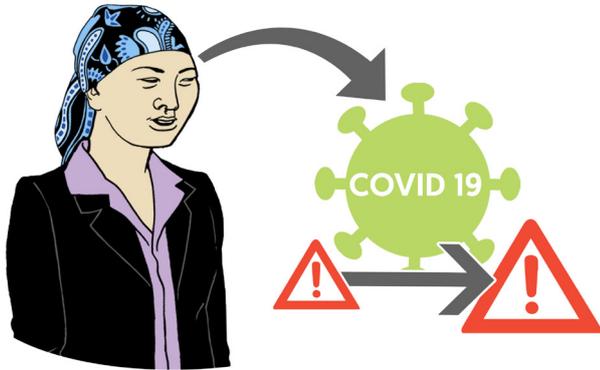
If you have cancer, you may be more at risk of becoming very ill if you have covid.

Some types of cancer and its treatments can make your **immune system** weaker.
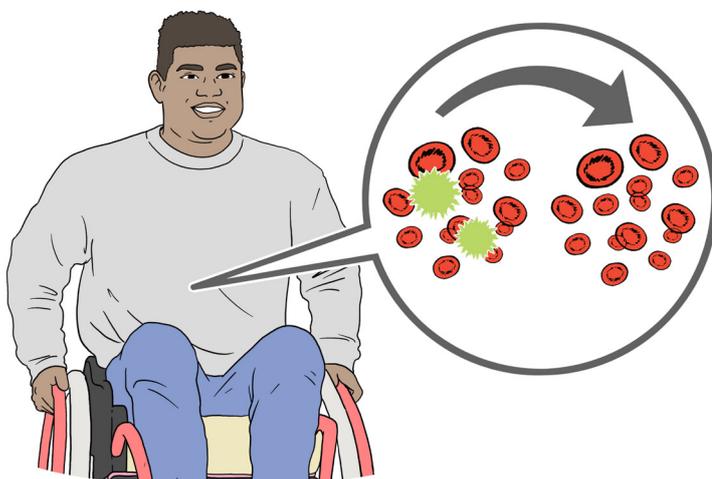
Your **immune system** fights viruses and infections in the body.
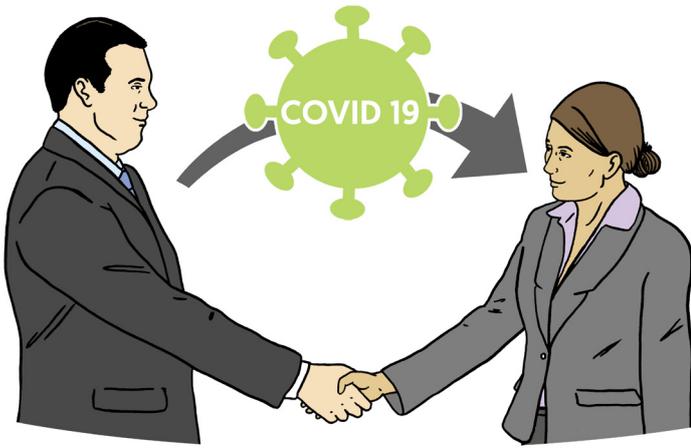
Covid can spread from person to person.
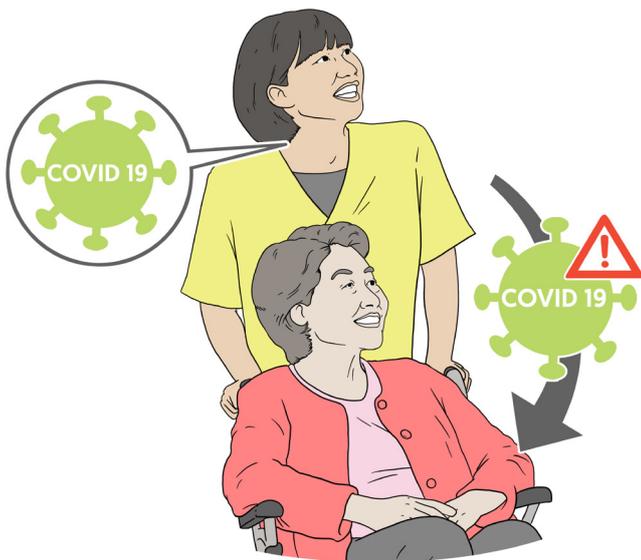
You can get it if you are near someone with the virus.

It can be spread through touching other people, coughing, and sneezing.

You can also get it by touching a surface that has covid germs on it.

How will covid make me feel?

If you have covid you may feel unwell.

If you have covid you may:

- have a cough that does not stop
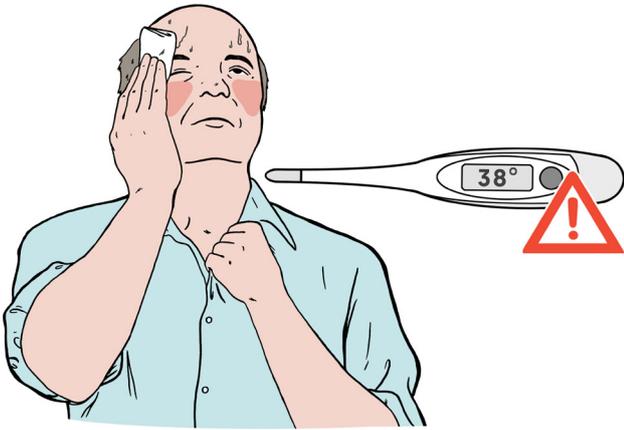
- feel hot or shivery with a high temperature. A high temperature is over 37.5°C.
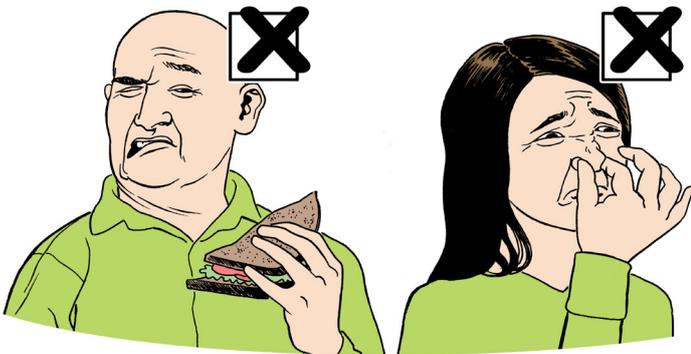
- not be able to smell or taste properly.

If you have cancer and feel unwell, call your cancer doctor or hospital right away for advice.

Some people with covid do not feel unwell. But they can still spread the virus to other people.

If you think you might have covid you must stay at home.

You must also stay away from other people.
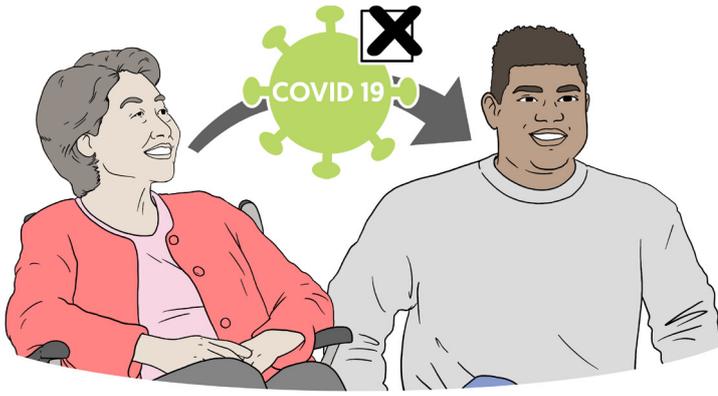
This is to stop you spreading covid to others.

Tell your doctor if you think you might have covid.

How will I know if I have covid?
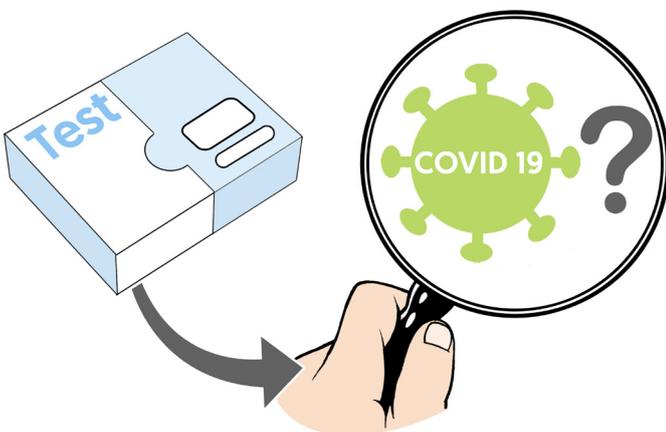
Some people can have a free test that will show if they have covid.

You may be able to order tests to do at home.
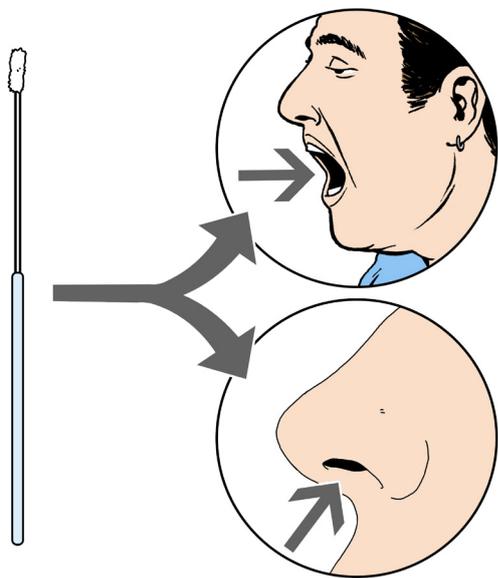
For the test, you will usually swab the back of your throat and your nose. The swab looks like a long cotton bud.
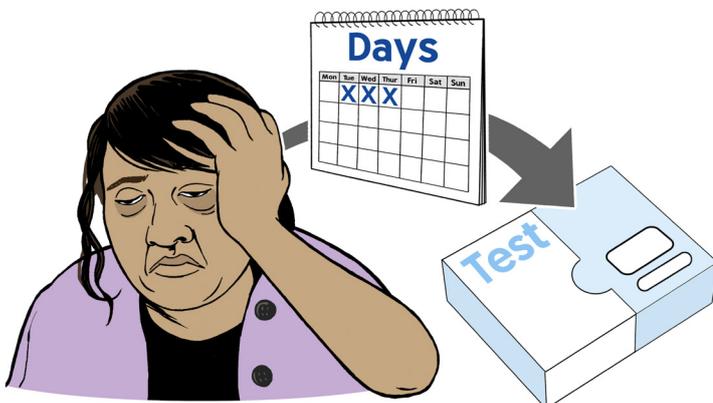
You will need to be tested within days of having **symptoms**. **Symptoms** are signs in your body that tell you something is wrong.

The rules about testing are different in England, Scotland, Wales and Nothern Ireland.


If you are in **England** and want to find out more go to:

www.gov.uk

If you are in **Scotland** and want to find out more go to:

www.gov.scot

If you are in **Wales** and want to find out more go to:

www.gov.wales

If you are in **Northern Ireland** and want to find out more go to:

www.publichealth.hscni.net
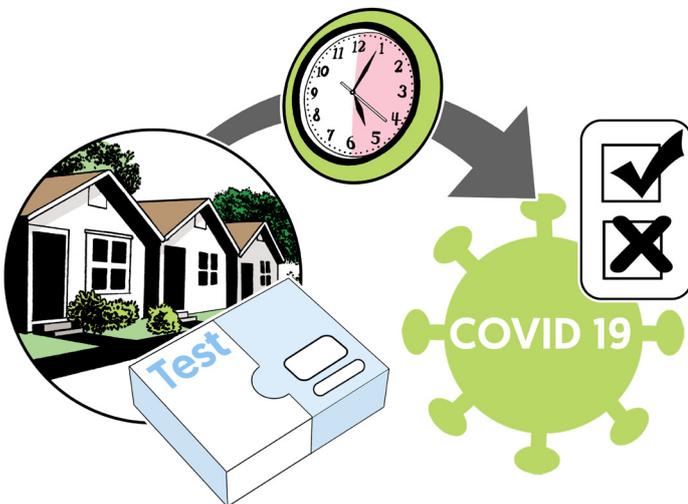
If you do the test at home, you will get results in 30 minutes.
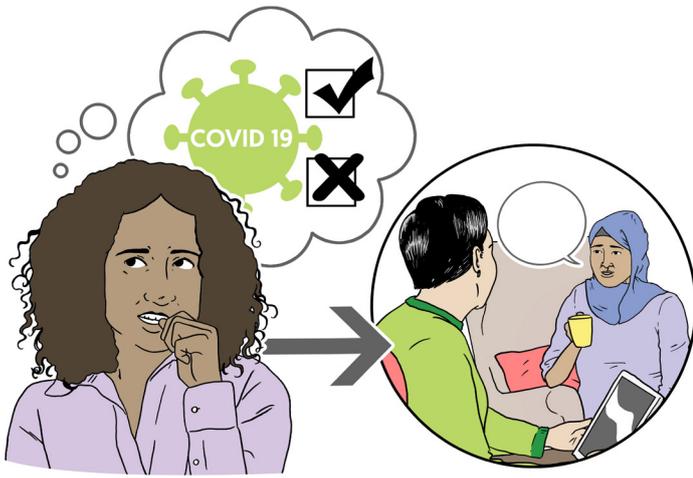
If you are worried after getting your results you can talk to someone about how you feel.

How can I protect myself if I have cancer?
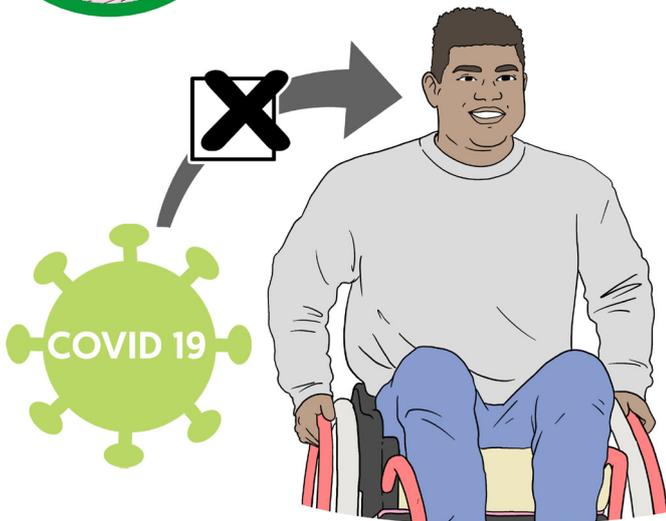
There are different things that you can do to protect yourself from covid.
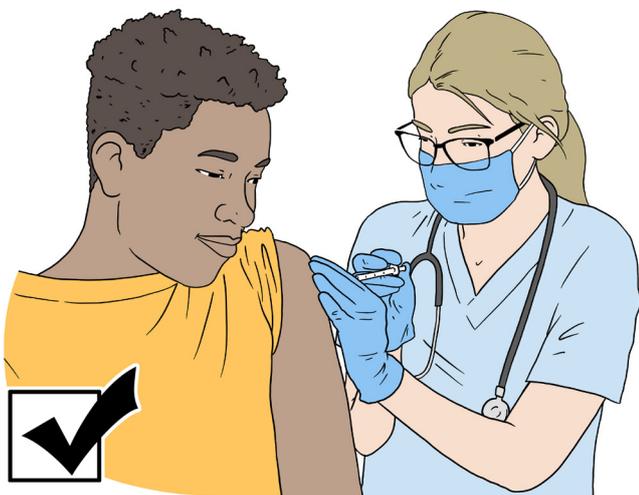
You can:

- Get covid **vaccines** when they are offered to you.
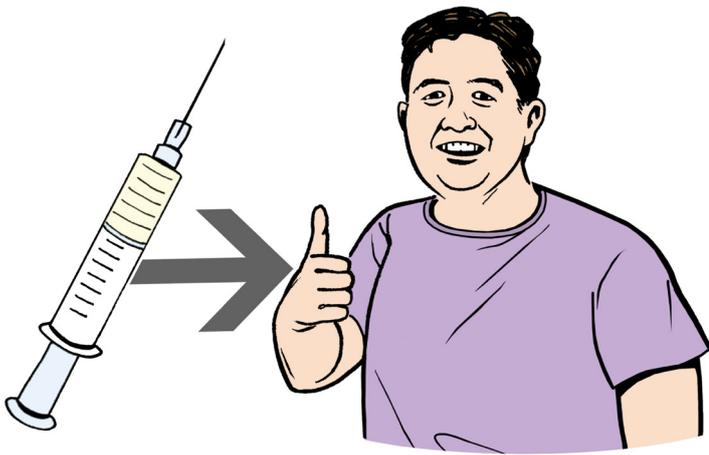
A **vaccine** is medicine that helps keep you safe from an illness.

- Wear a mask when you are with other people or outside your house. This must cover your mouth and nose.

- Try not to go to places that are very busy.
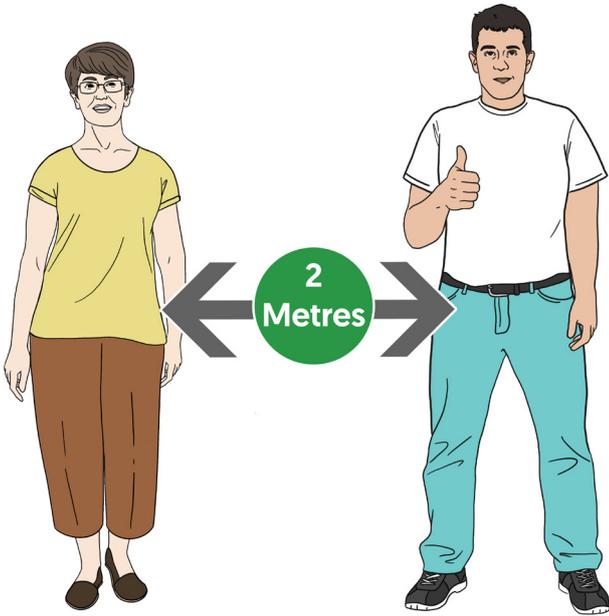
- Do not stand close to people and try to stay 2 metres apart.

- Clean your hands often.

You should have a test if you have cancer and think you have covid.

How can I take care of myself?

It is really important to look after your health if you have cancer.
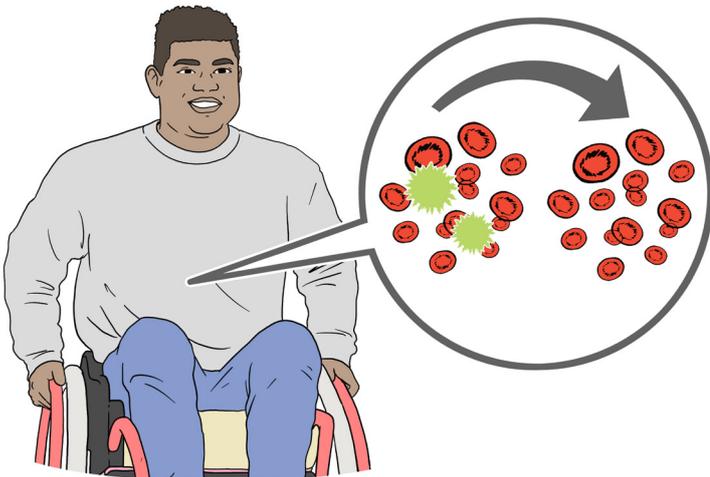
There are things you can do that can make your immune system stronger.
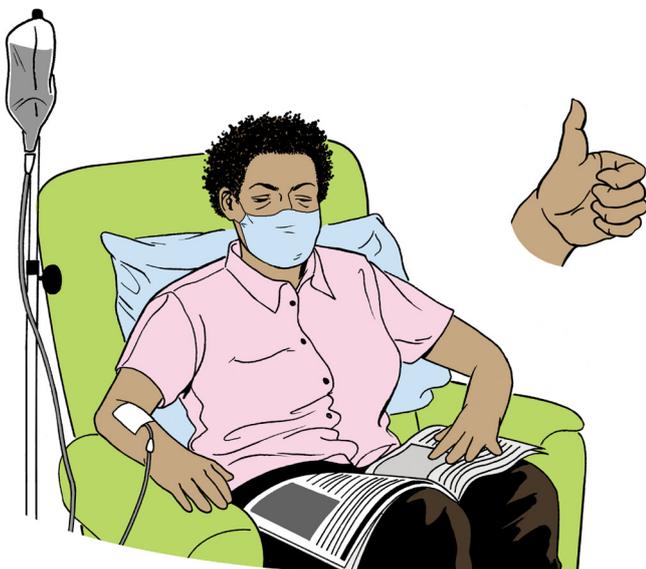
This can help you cope better with cancer treatment.

The best things to do are:

- eat healthy food

- drink lots of water or other fluids

- keep moving your body

- get enough rest

- talk to other people about how you are feeling.

We have more information in easy read about living a healthy life (see page **30**).

What will happen to my cancer treatment?

You might be worried about having cancer treatment, but you should still have your treatment as planned.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you are worried about this.
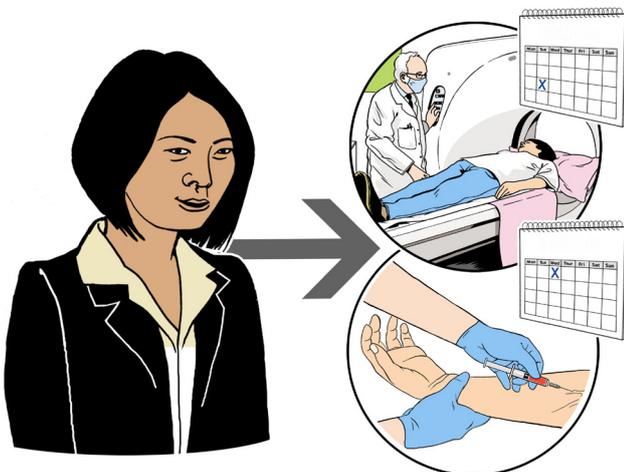
You may be waiting to have a scan or a test.
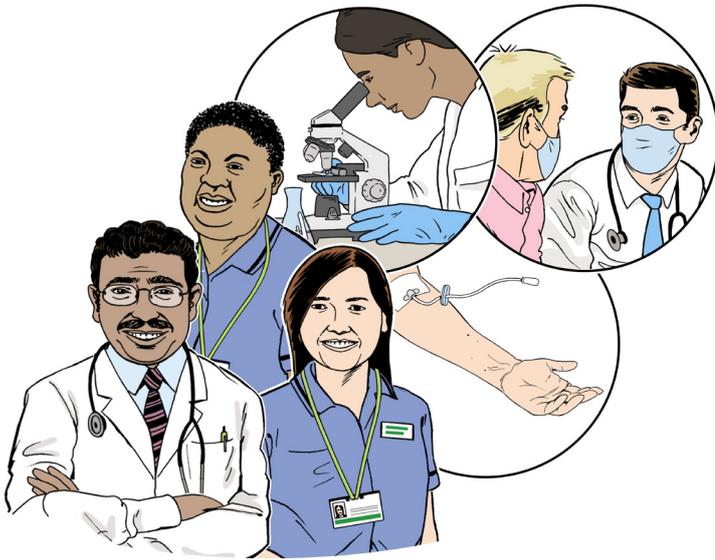
The cancer team will still diagnose and treat cancer, and they will give people the care they need.

You may have to wear a mask if you are having cancer treatment in a hospital or clinic.
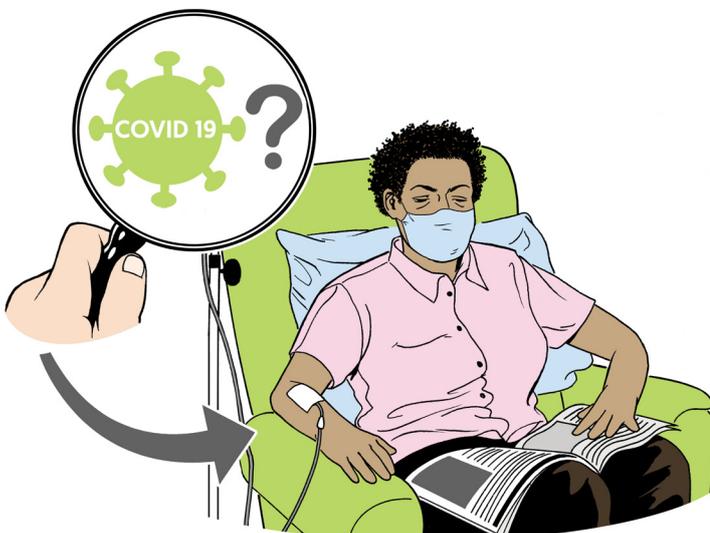
You may be tested for covid before your treatment.

You might be worried about getting a vaccine if you are having cancer treatment. It is safe to have the vaccine.
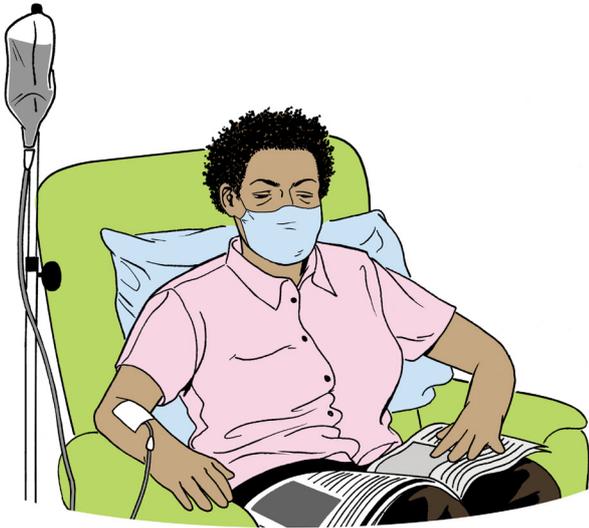
The vaccine may not work as well if you are having some cancer treatments. But it will still help to protect you from covid.

You can talk to your doctor about the best time to have your vaccine.

What is the covid vaccine?
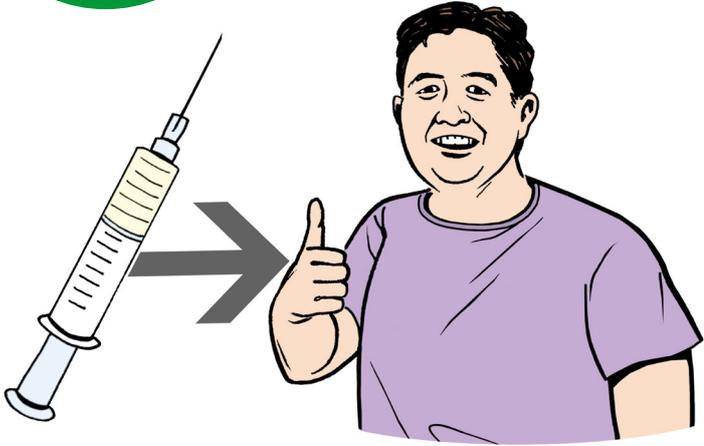
A vaccine is a medicine that helps to keep you safe from an illness.

Doctors want all adults to get the vaccine.

If you have cancer, you should have the vaccine as soon as you can. This is because you will be at risk of being very unwell if you get covid.

Doctors have tested the vaccines to make sure they are safe to use.

Your doctor will tell you when you can get your vaccine. It is important to get the vaccine when your doctor tells you.

How will I get my vaccine?
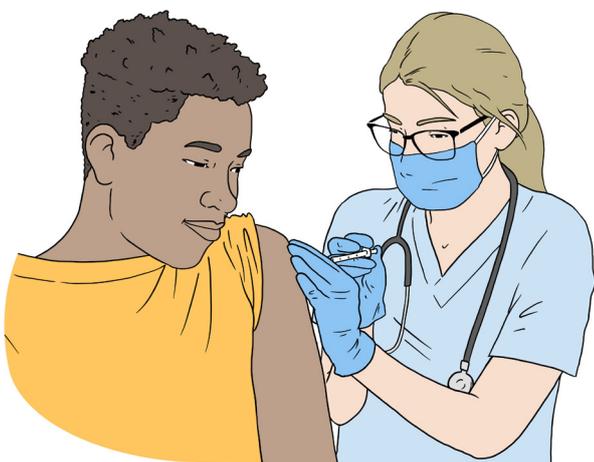
A doctor or nurse will give you the vaccine. It will be an injection with a needle in your arm.

it is important to get all the covid vaccines your doctor offers you.

What happens after I get the vaccine?
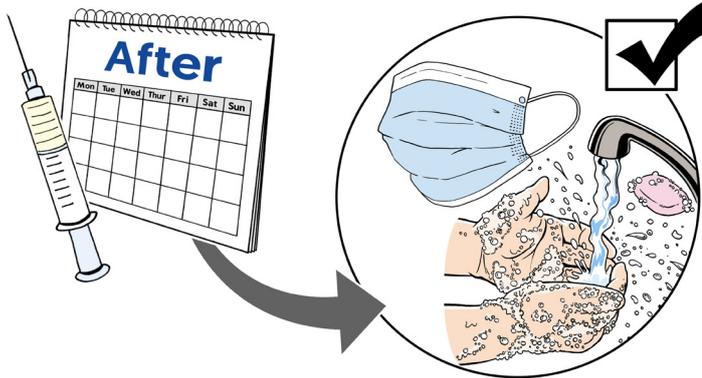
You will still need to be careful after you have had the vaccine.
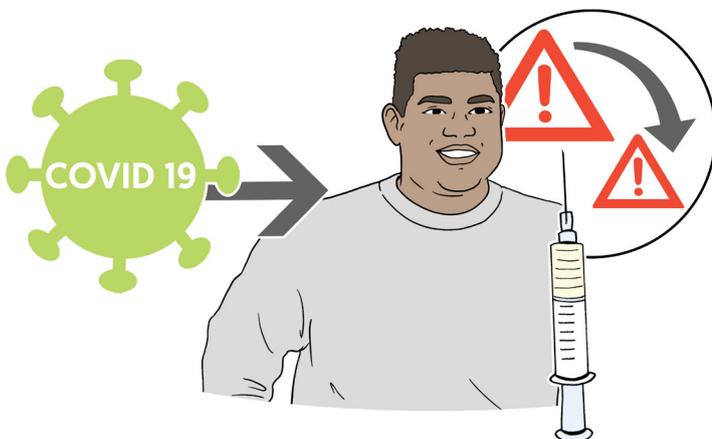
The vaccine may not stop the virus spreading. But it should stop you becoming very poorly if you get covid.

You must still follow the rules on pages **12** to **14** to stay safe after getting your vaccine.

How Macmillan can help you

You can get support from:

- The Macmillan Support Line. Call **0808 808 00 00** 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.

- The Macmillan website. Visit **macmillan.org.uk** for information about cancer. You can also use our web chat to ask questions at **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**
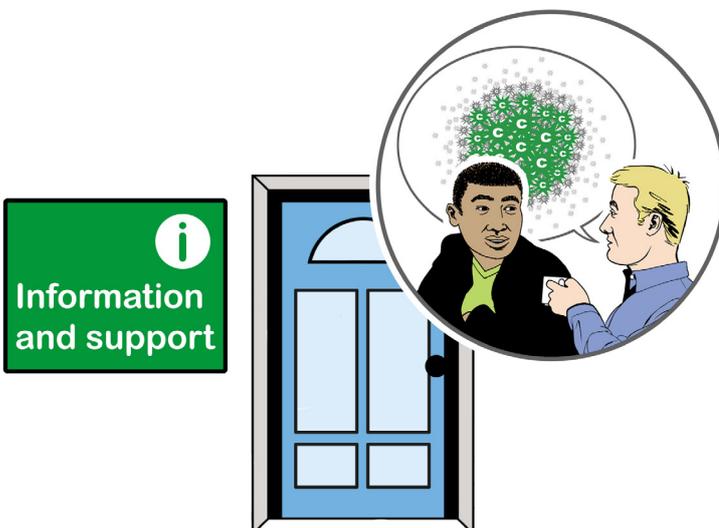
- Information centres. You can talk to a cancer support specialist and get written information. Find your nearest centre at **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres** or call us.

Information and support

- Local support groups. Find a group near you at **macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups** or call us.
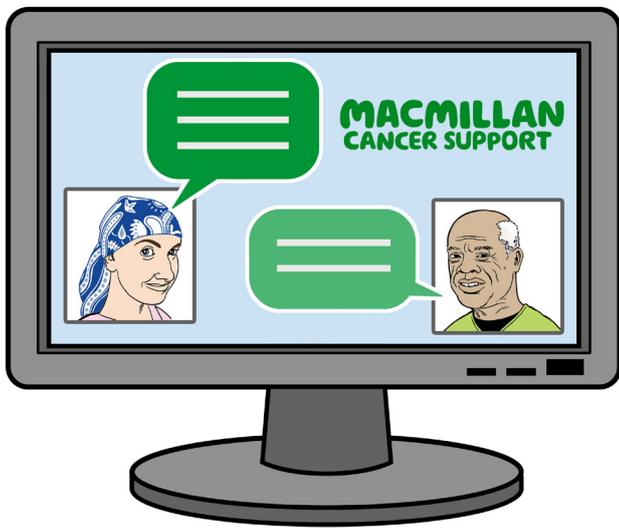
- The Macmillan Online Community. You can talk to other people in similar situations at **macmillan.org.uk/community**
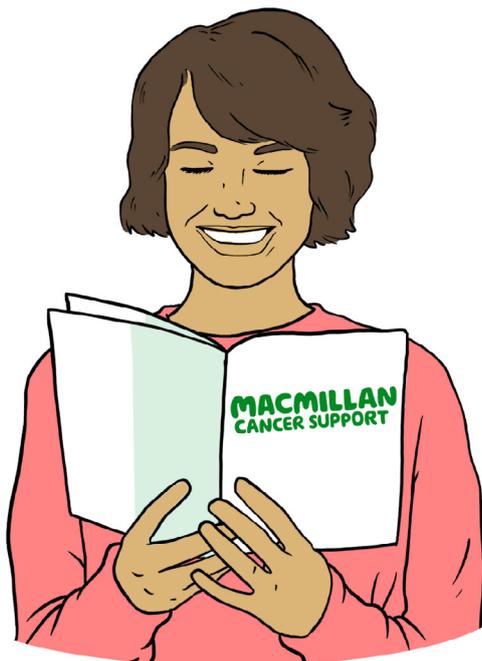
Macmillan can give you information in different ways:

Booklets about cancer

You can order booklets about cancer from **be.macmillan.org.uk**

Videos

You can watch videos about cancer at **macmillan.org.uk/videos**

Audio

You can listen to information about cancer and order CDs from **macmillan.org.uk/audio**
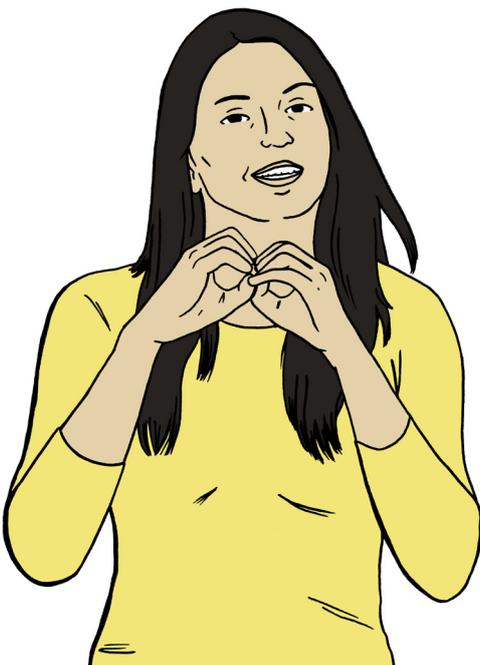
British Sign Language (BSL)

You can watch information in BSL at **macmillan.org.uk/bsl**

eBooks

You can get eBooks
about cancer from
be.macmillan.org.uk
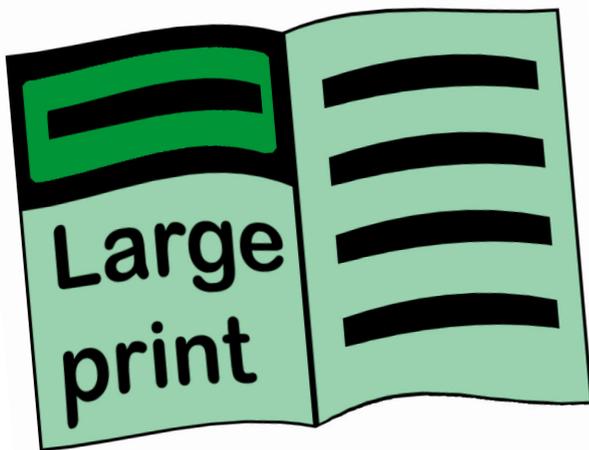
Large print

Tell us if you need
information in large print.
Email: **cancerinformationteam
@macmillan.org.uk**
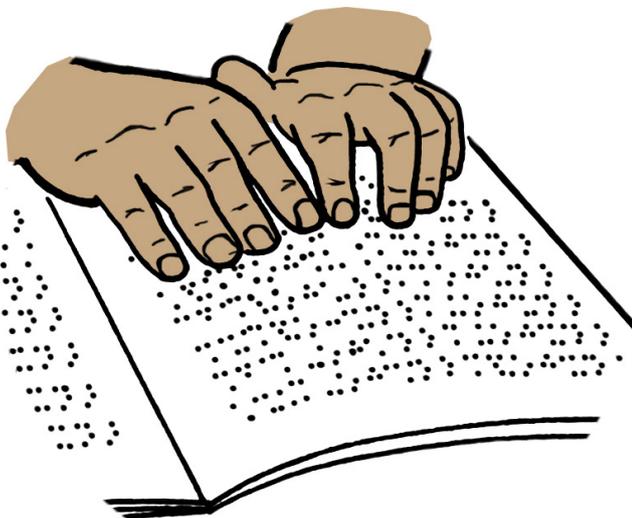
Braille

Tell us if you need
information in Braille.
Email: **cancerinformationteam
@macmillan.org.uk**

More easy read booklets

Order more easy read booklets from
macmillan.org.uk/easyread

There are booklets on lots of topics:

About Macmillan

- How Macmillan Cancer Support can help you
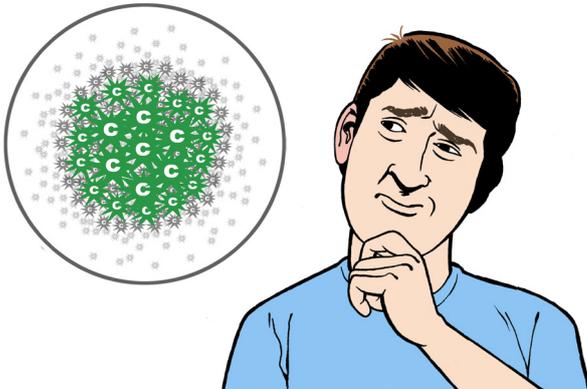
About cancer

- Lung cancer
- What is cancer?

Signs and symptoms

- Breast care for women
- Cervical screening (smear test)
- How to check your balls (testicles)
- Signs of cancer
- Symptoms of cervical cancer
- Symptoms of prostate cancer

Living a healthy life

- Be safe in the sun
- Drink less alcohol
- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Have safer sex

Tests for cancer

- Having a biopsy
- Having a colonoscopy
- Having a CT scan
- Having an endoscopy
- Having examinations and blood tests
- Having an MRI scan
- Having an ultrasound
- Having an x-ray
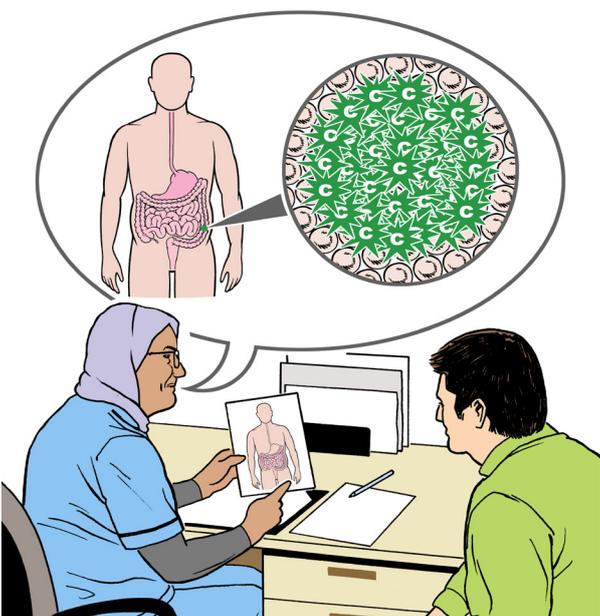
Being told you have cancer

- Finding out you have cancer
- Getting your test results
- Seeing the doctor

Treatment for cancer

- Chemotherapy
- Giving your consent
- Having surgery
- Radiotherapy
- Side effects from chemotherapy
- Side effects from radiotherapy
- Treatments for prostate cancer

Living with cancer

- 7 steps to equal healthcare
- Cancer and covid
- Claiming benefits when you have cancer
- Complementary therapies
- Help with costs when you have cancer
- Talking about cancer and your feelings
- Things that are important to me
- What happens after cancer treatment ends
- Work and cancer
- Your feelings and cancer
- Your sex life and cancer
- Your social life and cancer

End of life

- Changes that can happen at the end of life
- Choosing where to die
- Things you can do when getting ready to die
- Who can help if you are dying
- Your feelings if you are dying

After someone dies

- Going to a funeral when someone dies
- Grief and loss when someone dies
- How you may feel when someone dies
- What can help you feel better when someone dies

To order easy read booklets like this one go to the website **macmillan.org.uk/easyread** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**

This booklet is about cancer and covid.

It is for anyone who finds easier words and pictures helpful. If you have more questions about cancer or would like to talk to us, call the Macmillan Support Line.
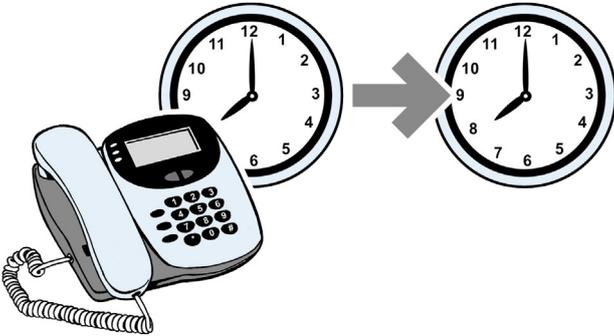
- Call us free on:
  0808 808 00 00
  7 days a week from 8am to 8pm.

- If you use a textphone, you can call:
  18001 0808 808 00 00

- Or go to the website
  macmillan.org.uk

This easy read booklet has been produced by Macmillan Cancer Support working with CHANGE.

Trusted Information Creator
Patient Information Forum

CHANGE

In partnership with

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT