

# Cancer Info Harrow

Cancer Screening / Cancer Care Services



# Acknowledgement

A huge thank you to Cancer Community Champion volunteers! Through your amazing support it was possible to identify Harrow community's needs for cancer information.

We hope this booklet represents the hard work we have done since Summer 2023, and the legacy of the Healthy Harrow Cancer Programme.

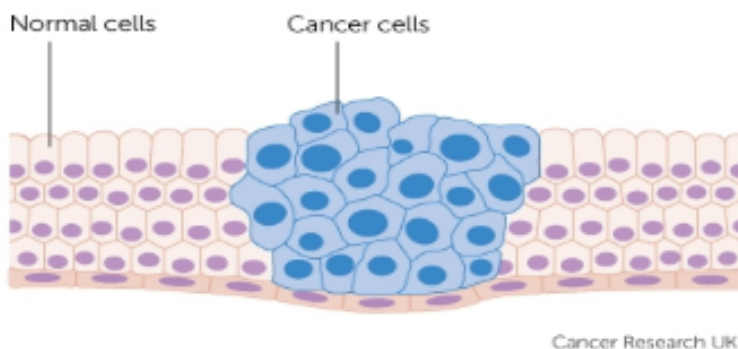
Thanks to Macmillan Cancer Support and RM Partners for funding this programme. We were able to reach so many people in Harrow and we have learned much through this project.

We believe this booklet will help people in Harrow to navigate cancer screening and cancer care services.

*\*All information correct at time of publishing this booklet: January 2025  
If you have received an online version of this booklet,  
many hyperlinks are embedded for your convenience.*



# What is Cancer?



**Cancer** is when abnormal cells divide in an uncontrolled way. Some cancers may eventually spread into other tissues. There are over 200 different types of cancer.

*[What is cancer? \(BSL enabled\) | Macmillan Cancer Support - YouTube](#)*

## Common symptoms of cancer

- Unexplained bruising or bleeding
- Lumps or swellings
- Pain
- Severe tiredness
- Fevers or infections
- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Moles or skin changes
- Swallowing problems/indigestion
- Bladder or bowel changes

# Lifestyle & Cancer

We do not know all of the causes of cancer, but we do know about the possible risk factors that can affect the chances of developing cancer.

## **Lifestyle changes to try and reduce the risk of cancer:**

- Stop smoking
- Eat a healthy diet
- Be physically active
- Keep to a healthy weight
- Follow recommended alcohol guidelines

# Diagnosis of Cancer

There are various ways in which people may get a diagnosis of cancer. They can either be picked up through asymptomatic (without symptoms) pathways (such as screening), or symptomatic pathways (such as a GP referral, A&E attendance or Hospital appointment).

The route to diagnosis often includes different tests and scans, and waiting for test results can be a worrying time. Being diagnosed with cancer means having to deal with issues and situations that cause worry and uncertainty. It is common to have multiple appointments leading up to, and following a cancer diagnosis.

# Cancer Treatments



There are many different types of treatment for cancer. Most common – chemotherapy, surgery, and radiotherapy. Newer, more targeted therapies, often use the body’s own immune system.

Your cancer team will help you to understand your treatment options. Make sure you have all the information you need. There are different things to help you to make treatment decisions.

*You can find out more on the Macmillan website about treatment options and making treatment decisions.*

# What is Cancer Screening?

**Cancer screening uses tests to find people who may:**

- have cancer – so it can be treated early and effectively
- need treatment or monitoring – to prevent cancer developing.
- Diagnosing cancer early can mean treatment is more effective and less complex. The earlier a cancer is diagnosed, the better your chance of survival and being cured.

**There are 3 national screening programmes in the UK:**

You can have regular screening tests to help find **breast or colorectal cancer early**, before you notice symptoms. There is also regular screening to **prevent the developing of cervical cancer**. This looks at the cervix for changes that could become cancer if not treated.

**Bowel cancer screening** is offered to people starting from the age of 50-60 up to 74 in England and Wales. In Northern Ireland it's offered to people aged 60-74. In Scotland people aged 50-74 are offered bowel cancer screening. You will be invited to take part in bowel cancer screening every two years.

**Breast cancer screening** is offered to women (including some transgender women, some transgender men and some non-binary) people aged 50-70 in the UK. You will be invited to take part in breast cancer screening every three years.

**Cervical screening** is offered to women (some transgender men and some non-binary people) aged 25-64 in the UK. How often you are invited depends on your age: every three years (25-49), every five years (50-64).

*You can find out more on the Macmillan website about cancer screening.*

# Bowel Cancer Screening

Bowel screening aims to find bowel cancer **early, before symptoms develop**. This can make it easier to treat and to cure.

If you have bowel cancer symptoms that continue for 3 weeks or more, talk to your GP. **Do not wait** for a bowel screening invite.

**The symptoms of bowel cancer may include:**

- blood in or on your poo (stools), or bleeding from the back passage (rectum) – the blood may be bright red or dark
- a change in your normal bowel habit that happens for no obvious reason and lasts longer than three weeks – for example, diarrhoea or constipation
- unexplained weight loss
- pain in your tummy (abdomen) or back passage
- feeling that you have not emptied your bowel properly after you poo
- unexplained tiredness, dizziness or breathlessness
- a lower than normal level of red blood cells (anaemia).

If you are registered with a GP, you will be offered your first **home screening bowel test** when you are aged between 50 and 60. The exact age depends on which UK country you live in. The screening programmes are based on research in each country and reflect the different needs of the populations.

## **The home test kit**

The test comes as a **home screening kit**. You will be sent a kit in the post, with clear instructions on how to use it. You use the kit to collect a small sample of your poo (stools) and send it back in a pre-paid envelope. The sample is checked in a laboratory for tiny amounts of blood.

*You can find out more on the [Macmillan](#) and [NHS](#) websites about bowel cancer screening. If you would like to see the [video](#) on how to use the home screening kit, this can be found on the [NHS](#) website.*

# Breast Cancer Screening

Breast cancer screening uses a low-dose x-ray of the breast, called a **mammogram**. A mammogram is a way of finding signs of early breast cancers that are too small to see or feel. It does not prevent breast cancer, but it does reduce the number of deaths from breast cancer each year. When breast cancer is diagnosed early, your treatment is more likely to be effective and you may need less treatment.

If you have possible symptoms of breast cancer, make an appointment with your GP. **Do not wait** for a breast screening invite.

## **Possible signs and symptoms of breast cancer can include:**

- a lump in the breast
- thickening of the skin or tissue of the breast
- dimpling of the skin of the breast
- a lump or swelling in either armpit
- a change in the shape or size of the breast, such as swelling in all or part of the breast
- a nipple turning in (inverted nipple)
- an eczema-like rash on the nipple
- discharge or bleeding from the nipple
- pain or discomfort in the breast that does not go away – this is rare.

A lump in the breast is the most common symptom of breast cancer. But most breast lumps are not cancer. They are usually filled with fluid and called cysts. Or they are made up of connective (fibrous) and glandular tissue and called fibroadenomas.

But it is very important to get checked by your GP if you have any of symptoms or notice anything else that is unusual for you. If breast cancer is diagnosed and treated early, treatment is more likely to be successful.

You can find out more on the [Macmillan](#) and [NHS](#) websites about breast cancer screening.



# Cervical Cancer Screening

Cervical screening is a way of preventing cervical cancer (cancer of the cervix). The main risk factor for cervical cancer is an infection called the human papilloma virus (HPV).

Cervical screening uses tests to find if there is HPV or abnormal changes in the cells of the cervix. It is very important to have screening, even if you have had a vaccine (to find out more about HPV vaccine visit NHS website), to help prevent HPV infection. The first part of cervical screening is to have a **smear test**. This is also called the cervical screening test.

Not everyone diagnosed with cervical cancer will have symptoms. That's why it's important to attend regular cervical screening.

## The most common symptoms of cervical cancer include:

- unusual vaginal bleeding
- pain or discomfort during sex
- vaginal discharge
- pain in the area between the hip bones (pelvis)

If you have any of these symptoms, you must get them checked by your GP. **Do not wait** for a cervical screening invite. But remember, they can all be caused by other conditions. Most people with these symptoms don't have cervical cancer.

You can find out more on the [Macmillan](#) and [NHS](#) websites about cervical cancer screening.

# Screening for Other Cancers



There is not enough evidence that screening everyone in a certain age range for other cancers would benefit most people. But researchers are always looking for new screening tests and new ways to find cancers at an early stage.

There is ongoing research into screening for different cancers, including prostate cancer, ovarian cancer and lung cancer. There is no national screening programme for these cancers. There is not a reliable enough test that reduces deaths from these cancers, or where the benefits outweigh possible harms.

## Prostate cancer

You can read more about why there is currently no national screening programme for prostate cancer in Macmillan information about the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test. This is a blood test that may help diagnose prostate cancer. If you have possible symptoms or risk factors for prostate cancer, talk to your GP about the PSA test.

If you are Black or have a family history of prostate cancer, you have a higher risk of developing prostate cancer and at a younger age. You can talk to your GP about when you should have the PSA test. Prostate cancer UK provides specific information about risk for Black men, and about family history.

## Lung cancer

Although there is no screening programme for lung cancer, people who have smoked are at a higher risk and may be invited for lung health checks. Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation has more information on lung health checks.

Cancer Research UK supports the national screening programmes for breast, bowel and cervical cancer. They have information about screening for other cancers, and why they do not recommend national screening programmes for these cancers.

## Ovarian cancer

There are ongoing studies to find a screening test for ovarian cancer. Ovacome provides information that explains why there is currently no national screening programme available for ovarian cancer. If you have a strong family history of ovarian cancer, talk to your GP. They may refer you to a genetics clinic to be assessed. Depending on your risk, regular screening tests may be an option.

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# Cancer Care Services



**What is available  
through Macmillan?**



Macmillan  
Website



Macmillan  
Support Line



Money and Work  
support line



Online community



Volunteer buddies



Bupa counselling  
services



Macmillan grants

## **Macmillan Website**

Cancer information and support.

If you or someone you care about has been diagnosed with cancer, we are here to help. Find out how we support you, and get information about different cancer types.

**Translations and Other Formats**

**Easy Read Resources are also available**

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## **Macmillan Support Line: Nurses and Advisers**

The Macmillan Support Line

0808 808 0000

8am - 8pm (365 days a year)

Cancer Information and Support Advisers

Cancer Information Nurse Specialists

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## **Online Community**

Ask An Expert: a place where questions can be asked.

Used anonymously, in comfort of own home

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## **Macmillan Buddies**

If you need to talk, we are here to listen. With a weekly call from one of our trained Macmillan Buddies you don't have to face cancer alone.

## ✔ **Free Bupa Counselling Service**

Through Bupa, Macmillan are offering free one-to-one counselling.

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## ✔ **Money, Finance and Insurance**

Financial issues can cause worry if you become ill. Find information on financial matters including pensions, mortgages, insurance and benefits.

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## ✔ **Macmillan Grants**

Macmillan Grants are means-tested payments to help with the extra costs that living with cancer can bring.

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## ✔ **Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors**

Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors are trained to give free, face-to-face advice to help you cope with the visible side effects of cancer treatment.

# List of GP surgeries in Harrow

Aspri Medical Centre

Bacon Lane Surgery

Belmont Health Centre

Elliott Hall Medical Centre

Enderley Road Medical Centre

First Choice Medical Centre

GP Direct

Hatch End Medical Centre

Headstone Lane Medical Centre

Headstone Road Surgery

Honeypot Medical Centre

Kenton Bridge Medical Centre  
(Dr. Abu and Partners)

Kenton Bridge Medical Centre  
(Dr. Raja)

Kenton Clinic

Kings Road Surgery

Mollison Way Surgery

Pinner View Medical Centre

Roxbourne Medical Centre

Savita Medical Centre

Shaftesbury Medical Centre

Simpson House Medical Centre

St Peter's Medical Centre

Stanmore Medical Centre

Streatfield Health Centre

The Circle Practice

The Civic Medical Centre

The Northwick Surgery

The Pinn Medical Centre

The Pinner Road Surgery

The Ridgeway Surgery

The Streatfield Medical Centre

Zain Medical Centre



# Useful Websites

Asthma and Lung UK

Blood Cancer UK

Bowel Cancer UK

Black Women Rising

Breast Cancer Now

Cancer Research UK

Children with Cancer UK

Kidney Cancer UK

Leukaemia UK

Liver Cancer UK

Maggie's

Marie Curie

Orchid Cancer (Male Cancer)

Pancreatic Cancer UK

Prostate Cancer UK

Teenage Cancer Trust

The Brain Tumour Charity

The Eve Appeal

Young Lives vs Cancer

***Cancer risk increases as we age. Anyone can get cancer, but most cases are in people over the age of 50. Around 4 in 10 cancer cases in the UK could be prevented. Whatever your age, making healthy changes can help reduce your risk.***

Aspire Centre (Activities/Access for People with Disabilities)

Bannister Sports Centre

British Nutrition Foundation

Cedars Youth & Community Centre

Harrow Cycle Hub

Harrow Green Spaces

Harrow Health Walks

Harrow Leisure Centre

Harrow Parkrun

HarroWall

Hatch End Swimming Pool

NHS - 8 Tips for Healthy Eating

NHS - Exercise Guidelines

NHS - The Eatwell Guide

NHS - Water, Drinks, and Hydration

Street Tag

Tennis Courts

We Are Undefeatable

Wheels for All (Activities/Access for People with Disabilities)

WHO - Healthy Diet

*A Healthy Diet, A Healthy World - YouTube by WHO*

*What is Physical Activity? - YouTube by Cancer Research UK*

# Local Services

Healthy Harrow

Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service  
in Northwick Park Hospital

Citizens Advice: Macmillan Benefits Advice Service

Asian Women Cancer Group Harrow



## Other Local Services

Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow & Brent

Bereavement Care Harrow

Community ConneX

Conversation Café Harrow

HAD (Harrow Association of Disabled People)

Harrow Carers

Harrow Foodbank

Harrow Samaritans

Mind in Harrow

St Luke's Hospice