

Living with Lung Cancer

Practical Tips for Managing Common Symptoms

You may experience various symptoms as a result of your lung cancer and/or its treatment. Talk to your healthcare professional about how the symptoms affect you; so that they can help you. This leaflet provides some practical help for some of the more common symptoms.

Do you feel breathless?

Breathing exercises, relaxation techniques and yoga are all useful for managing breathlessness – talk to your healthcare professional about where you can access these services locally. Other practical tips include:

- Sit down when doing everyday tasks e.g. washing, getting dressed and preparing food
- Eat small meals – select foods which are soft and easy to eat
- Avoid house dust and smoky places
- Walk slowly or with a stick; pace yourself – take extra time to get where you are going
- When climbing the stairs at home find a safe place to sit near the top. Then you can rest before continuing
- Cool air blowing directly onto or across your face may help. Sit by an open window or use a small, handheld fan
- Avoid bending or stretching to reach cupboards and shelves. Arrange your kitchen so the items you use frequently are stored at waist height
- Wear loose-fitting clothes, especially around your waist and chest. Slip-on shoes are easier to get on and off
- Use a cordless telephone or mobile phone – then you will not have to rush to answer calls
- A baby monitor is a good way of talking to someone in another room without having to shout or get up

Produced in conjunction with



Do you have a dry or sore mouth or throat?

If you have noticed any changes in your mouth ask your healthcare professional to have a look to make sure you do not need any treatment.

Eating and swallowing can be difficult if you have a dry or sore mouth and throat. You may find the following useful:

- Keep your mouth clean and fresh:
 - Use a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste to clean your teeth after meals
 - If you have dentures, try to leave them out of your mouth as much as possible during the day. If you are wearing them, try to clean them after every meal. Soak your dentures overnight in a denture cleansing solution
 - Try using a non-alcohol mouthwash e.g. a saline (salty water) solution made up of one teaspoon of salt dissolved in one pint of cold or warm water. A soft toothbrush dipped in this solution can be used to clean your tongue
- Try sugar-free boiled sweets or sugar-free chewing gum to help saliva production
- Drink or sip fluids regularly and often between meals. Try drinking through a straw
- Keep your lips moist by using lip balm
- Eat soft, moist or liquidised foods – try adding sauces or gravies to food
- Whilst your mouth is uncomfortable it may be helpful to temporarily avoid rough-textured food e.g. toast and raw vegetables
- You may struggle with eating some foods such as bread, chocolate and pastry as they can stick to the roof of your mouth, ensure they are moist by adding butter, mayonnaise or salad cream or having with soup or by swapping for a food that melts in your mouth better such as savoury or cheese thins
- Take care with fizzy drinks and tangy fruits e.g. lemon, grapefruit and orange

Do you feel very tired?

Feeling tired all, or most of the time, is common. It may help if you make a list of what you have to do each day and then:

- Prioritise the things you need to get done first
- Ask for help from those around you
- Take time to rest

Help and support are there for you

Discuss any problems or worries you have with your healthcare professional; they will be able to provide you with help and advice. They will also be able to provide information about local organisations that can support you.

For further information about Nutrition in Cancer visit www.nutritionincancer.co.uk

Further support is available from the following associations:

Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation

0333 323 7200

www.roycastle.org

Macmillan Cancer Support

0808 808 00 00

www.macmillan.org.uk