

# Living with Oesophageal Cancer

## A Quick Guide

### Contents

This is a brief summary on 'Living with oesophageal cancer' from our website. You will find more detailed information on there. In this information there are sections on

- Coping with oesophageal cancer
- Diet after oesophageal cancer
- Questions for your doctor
- Oesophageal cancer organisations

You can view this information in a larger print on our website.

### Coping with oesophageal cancer

It can be very difficult coping with a diagnosis of cancer, both practically and emotionally. You are likely to be feeling very upset and confused. As well as coping with the fear and anxiety that a diagnosis of cancer brings, you have to work out how to manage practically. The coping with cancer section on our website contains lots of information you may find helpful. There are sections about:

- Your feelings
- Talking to people: who and what to tell
- Talking to children
- How you can help yourself
- Who else can help you
- Sick pay and benefits: coping financially

### Diet after oesophageal cancer

Having cancer of the food pipe (oesophagus) will affect your eating and drinking habits, whatever your stage or treatment. Many people with oesophageal cancer find it hard to eat well because they have difficulty swallowing. However it is important to eat well to ensure you are getting enough calories and protein to control weight loss and maintain your strength.

A dietician can help you to cope with any problems with eating or drinking. They can advise you about ways of maintaining weight by boosting calories in food and getting high calorie and high protein drinks or powders. If you are having problems swallowing, you may need to have softer foods.

### Other help

With everyday difficulties such as dietary problems, it often helps to get advice from people who are in the same situation as you. Try contacting a support group or one of the oesophageal cancer organisations.

It can help to keep a food diary if you are having problems that you think are related to your diet. Take a small notebook and draw a line down the centre of each page. Write down what you eat and when on the left of the page. Write down any symptoms you get and when on the other side of the page. After a few days, you may be able to spot which foods cause which symptoms.

## What to ask your doctor about living with oesophageal cancer

- How will my treatment affect me?
- Will I be able to go back to work and take up my usual hobbies, sports and activities again?
- If I have difficulty eating, who can I go to for help?
- Will I need a special diet?
- Is there anything I shouldn't eat?
- Will I need any extra vitamins or other diet supplements?
- How do I see a dietician?
- Where can I get help with money matters, including claiming benefits?
- What practical help is available?
- Where can I get help dealing with my feelings?
- Is there any counselling available?
- Do I have to pay for counselling?
- What practical help is available?
- Could you refer me to a specialist nurse?

## Oesophageal cancer organisations

### Cancer Research UK

Website: [www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer)

Nurses phone: 0808 800 4040

### Oesophageal Patients' Association

Tel: 0121 704 9860

Website: [www.opa.org.uk](http://www.opa.org.uk)

Email: [enquiries@opa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@opa.org.uk)

### CORE

Tel: 020 7486 0341

Website: [www.corecharity.org.uk](http://www.corecharity.org.uk)

Email: [info@corecharity.org.uk](mailto:info@corecharity.org.uk)

### The Barrett's Oesophagus Campaign

Telephone: 020 7472 6223

email: [info@barrettscampaign.org.uk](mailto:info@barrettscampaign.org.uk)

website: [www.barrettscampaign.org.uk](http://www.barrettscampaign.org.uk)

### Ochre

Telephone: 0800 822 3370

Email: [committee@ochrecharity.co.uk](mailto:committee@ochrecharity.co.uk)

Website: [www.ochre-charity.co.uk](http://www.ochre-charity.co.uk)

**For more information**, visit our website <http://www.cruk.org/about-cancer>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. Our information is based on the best current scientific evidence and reviewed regularly by leading clinicians and experts in health and social care.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on 0808 800 4040 9am till 5pm Monday to Friday.

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