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University Health Board

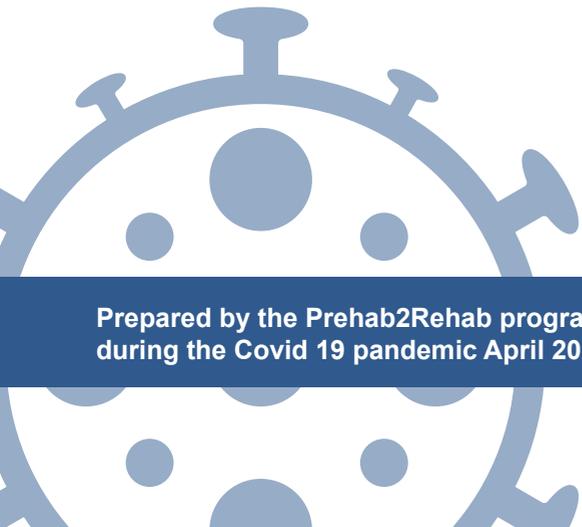
Patient information

Prehabilitation: Preparing for Your Treatment
Get Fitter, Stronger and Ready



Who is this booklet for?

This leaflet provides information and support on how you can prepare for your treatment, helping you to take control and be involved in your care. You have been given this leaflet by your Doctor or Clinical Nurse Specialist because you have been told you have, or may have, cancer. The Covid-19 pandemic means that unfortunately, some aspects of your treatment may need to change for your safety. Your NHS team are working hard to plan your cancer treatment as safely and quickly as possible. It is understandable to feel worried about having a cancer diagnosis and treatment, even more so at this time. The information in this leaflet, along with the support of your NHS team, will help you prepare for treatment.



Prepared by the Prehab2Rehab programme
during the Covid 19 pandemic April 2020

What is Prehabilitation?

Cancer treatment (such as surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy) will be a challenge for you and your body. Prehabilitation helps you and your body prepare for future cancer treatment. Making a small number of changes now can make a big difference to the way you respond and recover from your cancer treatment. Scientific information tells us prehabilitation can help you to:

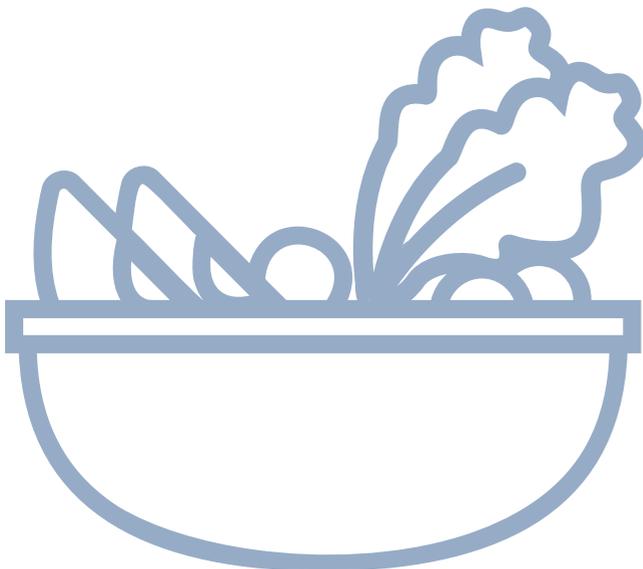
- ✓ Reduce your anxiety and improve your mood.
- ✓ Improve your energy levels, reducing tiredness.
- ✓ Maintain your independence and do more of your normal day to day activities.
- ✓ Improve your sleep pattern.
- ✓ Improve your general fitness and sense of wellbeing.
- ✓ Have fewer problems during your cancer treatment.
- ✓ Have fewer admissions to hospital and shorter stays in hospital.
- ✓ Have a better response to your future cancer treatment.
- ✓ Recover more quickly from treatments.
- ✓ Lower your chances of cancer coming back after any treatment finishes.
- ✓ Help you manage any other medical or health conditions.
- ✓ Promote long-term healthy lifestyle and well-being.



What does Prehabilitation involve?

Preparing for cancer treatment involves thinking about your routines, activities, eating patterns, habits, lifestyle etc, and to change some of these in order to improve your health and wellbeing. The factors we know are important for health include:

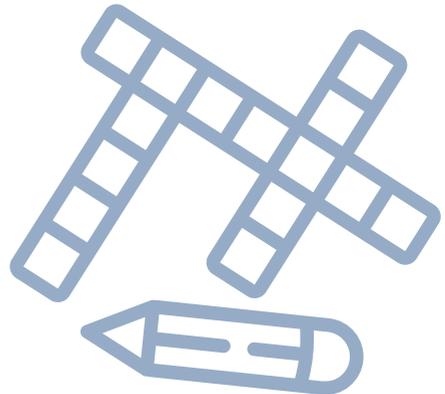
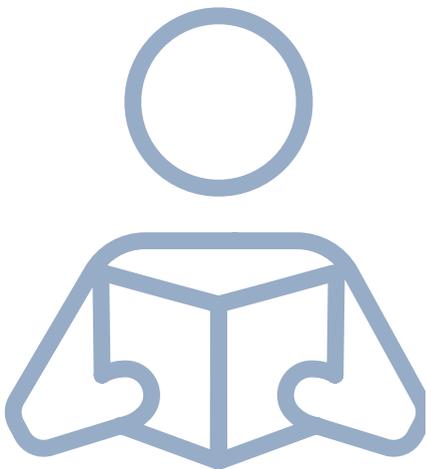
- ✓ Moving more and being as active as possible.
- ✓ Looking after diet by eating well.
- ✓ Keeping hydrated by drinking enough fluids, especially water.
- ✓ Cutting out alcohol or at least minimising you intake.
- ✓ Stopping smoking or at least significantly cutting down.
- ✓ Using psychological strategies to help manage low mood and worries.



Look after your general mood and wellbeing

Worries are normal, but these tips may help to manage any uncomfortable feelings.

- Limit how often you follow news, once a day is more than enough.
- Plan a routine for each part of the day a suggested day is below.
- Structure your day, going to bed and getting up at the same time every day.
- Keep in contact with friends/family using the phone or social media platforms. How about writing a letter to a friend you don't often see.
- Check in on a lone neighbour or friend.
- If you have a garden, spend a little time outdoors each day.



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- Take time to care for yourself, by taking a warm bath, petting the cat/dog, enjoying an activity such as reading, listening to music etc.
 - Relaxation and mindfulness practice can help when people feel anxious, worried or low.
 - Spend time making fresh meals. It takes more time than ready meals and can add structure to your day.
 - At the end of each day, reflect on three positive things that have happened in the day (however small), such as receiving a text from a friend or enjoying a meal you have cooked etc.

Here are some other places where you can find further advice and support for your wellbeing:



1. Maggie's Cardiff

029 2240 8024

Website: <https://www.maggies.org/our-centres/maggies-cardiff/>

2. Macmillan Cancer Support

0800 808 00 00

7 days a week, 8am – 8pm.

Website: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/>

3. Tenovus Cancer Care

0808 808 1010

Monday – Friday 9am -5pm, weekends and bank holidays 10am – 1pm

Website: <https://www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk/>

4. Velindre Cancer Centre Mindfulness App

For android download on Google Play [HERE](#)

5. For Apple download on App Store [HERE](#)



Move more and being active

We need to be as active as possible as this keeps your heart and lungs strong, and will help your body cope well with cancer and any current or future treatments. Any activity that makes you feel slightly out of breath is beneficial. If you are already active, continue as you are, or if you feel able, try and do a little more. During social isolation or if you are shielding, although this is difficult, think of ways to use your home, or garden if you have one. Speak with your healthcare professional if you want to access outside spaces and parks for the purpose of exercise. Make sure you always follow Welsh Government's latest advice and guidelines:



[Click here for more information](#)

If you are not currently very active or feel you could do more, this is the time to give it a go. Do it today, don't put it off. Lack of movement is very bad for our bodies, our muscles waste away quickly and this affects our strength and our balance. Our muscles, bones and joints like to be moved, even though they might creak and groan a bit.

The following links – will provide ideas for physical activity and exercise for you to do at home. Keep a diary of your achievements to share with your healthcare team. But please discuss any concerns about your exercise ability with your healthcare team or GP if you feel it is needed. Do not wait, as exercise is a very important part of your preparation for and ability to complete any treatment.



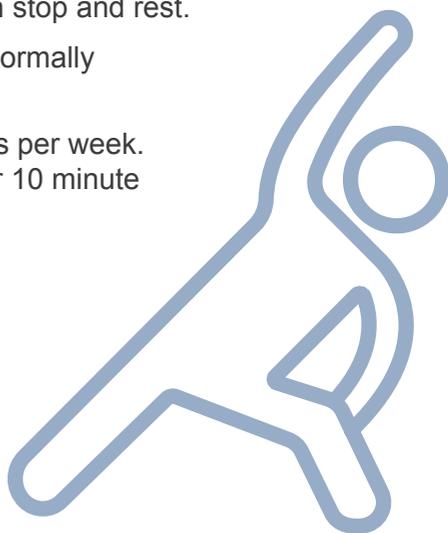
1. Macmillan move more programme: Warm up
2. Macmillan move more: strength and endurance
3. Macmillan Move More: cool down
4. World Cancer Research Fund: Flexibility
5. NHS: Yoga for beginners at any fitness level
6. NHS: Pilates for beginners



Before you start

We want you to be active, but we don't want you to fall and injure yourself. If you are not steady on your feet or if you have had a fall before, you should take extra care when moving around. Ask your keyworker about the Community Balance Service in your local area for extra support if you feel this is needed.

- ✓ Try to avoid long periods of sitting and find ways to build movement into your day.
- ✓ Wear non-slip and supportive shoes.
- ✓ Start small and gradually increase your activity levels.
- ✓ Use something sturdy and solid for support (for example a kitchen work surface).
- ✓ Try brisk walking, or jogging on the spot or around your garden; cleaning, dancing, gardening or playing with your pet or children can all help.
- ✓ Feeling your muscles work or feeling a slight muscle soreness the next day is normal. Do not let it put you off.
- ✓ If you have acute pain anywhere then stop and rest.
- ✓ Try not to hold your breath, breathe normally throughout.
- ✓ Aim for 3-5 sessions of 20-30 minutes per week. This can be broken down into smaller 10 minute sessions if you prefer.





Eat well

Now more than ever it is important to 'Eat well'.

Choosing a wide variety of foods and well balanced meals can help you feel better, maximise your energy levels and build up good immunity. This is especially important as you prepare for your cancer treatments.

Useful tips



1. Try to have at least 3 meals per day.
2. Include starchy carbohydrates at each meal – for example cereals, bread, potatoes, rice, chapattis and pasta. A portion is typically 2-3 tablespoons/1 slice.
3. Aim for 2-3 portions of dairy items or dairy-free alternatives every day to help support your bone health. If you are overweight, choose the lower fat variety. A portion is typically one pot of yoghurt, matchbox size piece of cheese or 200ml of milk.
4. Aim to include protein with each meal – such as meat, chicken, fish, egg, nuts, beans, lentils, pulses, Quorn© or tofu.
5. Try to include at least 5 portions of different fruit and vegetables each day. One portion is roughly the size of your clenched fist. Fresh, dried, tinned and frozen varieties are all suitable.
6. Aim for at least 6-8 glasses of fluid throughout the day.
7. A vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms/day is recommended if your access to sun light is reduced or you are isolating indoors. Discuss with your healthcare professional if you are unsure if you should take a supplement.

To find out more information on healthy eating visit:



[Click here for more information](#)



If you are underweight, are losing weight or have a poor appetite

1. You should try to eat 3 meals a day with snacks and nourishing drinks in between. Try including mixed nuts, yoghurts, cheese and crackers, toast, crumpets or full fat milk, hot chocolate, milkshakes or smoothies.
2. If you eat low fat or “diet” type foods, switch to the full fat or full calorie equivalents as the extra energy in them may halt or slow any unintentional weight loss.
3. Aim to include some protein foods in each meal and snack, such as meat, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, beans and nuts.
4. Try enriching your foods by adding extra calories to them, for example:
 - add cheese to soups, pasta, mash potato or vegetables.
 - add extra butter, margarine to vegetables, bread or scrambled egg.
5. Take drinks after meals rather than with meals so that they do not fill you up.

If you are worried about weight loss visit:



[Click here for more information](#)

This tool will provide you with first line advice on how to prevent you losing further weight. You may need to see a dietitian for individual support.



Alcohol

Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits, or lower, to improve your body's ability to cope with any future cancer treatment. Reducing the amount of alcohol during this pandemic will also help reduce the risk of accidents, further decreasing the demands on the already overstretched NHS.

What can I do?

- Check if you are drinking within safe limits
<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/selfassessment>
- For more advice on how to drink within safe limits
<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/how-to-reduce-your-drinking/>



Smoking



Stopping smoking is hard, but strongly advised, and well worth it! Quitting or cutting down will improve your general health and will help your response to cancer treatment. If you need surgery, quitting can also speed up your recovery and reduce your time in hospital. And should you contract COVID-19, not smoking gives your lungs the greatest help. We all know how hard it is to stop, but there is help available:

For free advice and support, contact **Help Me Quit!**

[Click here](#)

This is a really useful first step or
Freephone **0808 250 6061**

Finances

Having a cancer diagnosis can often make money a worry, even more so now with Covid-19 having such an impact on our lives. If you are worried about your finances, it is important to seek support.



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3. Tenovus Cancer Care

0808 808 1010

Monday – Friday 9am -5pm, weekends and bank holidays 10am – 1pm

Website: <https://www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk/>

4. Your employer

5. Citizen's advice - Cardiff and Vale <http://cacv.org.uk/>

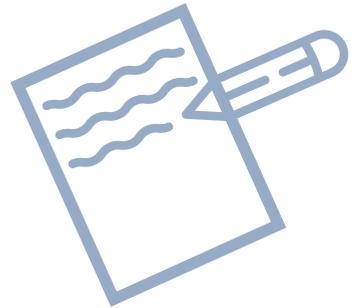
6. Government guidance: Information for individuals and businesses in Wales : <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-wales>

Planning your day

The days can feel very long when you are at home all day. Planning your day in advance can help and it will remind you to move around during the day too. Here's an example:

Morning

1. Get up and dressed.
2. 10 minutes of exercise.
3. Tidy and dust one room.
4. Puzzles or write a letter.
5. 10 minutes of exercise.
6. Catch your favourite TV/radio for 30 mins.



Breakfast - ideas include: Scrambled eggs and toast, porridge made with milk, Greek yoghurt and mixed berries, lean bacon, eggs and toast, bagel with peanut butter plus glass of water, orange juice or cup of tea or coffee.





Afternoon

1. Weed and water the pots on the balcony, patio or garden.
2. Sit quietly for 15 minutes, take time to notice the beauty of nature around you and listen to the sounds of the birds.
3. Hobbies such as sewing, DIY, reading, knitting.
4. 10 minutes exercise.

Lunch - ideas include: Fish pie and vegetables, spaghetti bolognese, lean meat/chicken, potatoes and vegetables, chicken and vegetable curry with rice.



Evening

1. Deep breaths, stretching and relaxation.
2. Phone a friend for a chat.
3. Relax, you've had a busy day!

Bedtime: Hot drink or have a hot milky drink if you are losing weight or have a small appetite.



Getting further support and help

While we are caring for you, you will have a main point of contact called a key worker. This is usually a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) who is highly trained to help you make sense of your cancer diagnosis, treatment and effects. Your CNS/key worker is an important member of the multidisciplinary team who are caring for you. Your key worker will:

- Provide reassuring one to one care.
- Help you to understand your cancer and its treatment.
- Provide or signpost you to relevant information.
- Discuss any tests or treatment options with you.
- Liaise with other health professionals who may be involved in your care.
- Act as a source of advice and support.
- Provide information on support groups.
- Talk with you about any emotional, financial, social and physical concerns you may have and with your permission, refer you to other services who can offer extra support.

Your Clinical Nurse Specialist or keyworker is:

Contact details:

Date:

Your key worker will respond to your query as soon as possible, but during this time of Covid-19 we have an additional Cancer Support Line which you can contact.

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Cancer Support Line

Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm

029 2074 5655



We hope you found this patient information booklet informative and helpful. If you would like to give us feedback on what you thought of the booklet and whether it has prompted you to make any lifestyle changes, please visit:

Please click [HERE](#)



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