

# Somerset prehabilitation for cancer

## Prehabilitation for cancer Patient information

outstanding care  
listening and leading  
working together

### The aim of prehabilitation

Prehabilitation helps you and your body prepare for your future cancer treatment. Making a small number of changes now, can make a big difference to the way in which you respond and recover from your cancer treatment.

It helps if you prepare yourself as much as possible before you start your cancer treatment as you are more likely to cope well and have better long term health, however, important benefits can be seen in as little as two weeks.

#### Benefits can include:

- Fewer problems during your treatment
- Better mood / less anxiety
- Better energy levels
- Lower chance of your current cancer returning in the future and other cancers or long-term health conditions developing
- Improve your quality of life

### Somerset prehabilitation for cancer

Our programme has a range of services to suit you including exercise, nutrition and wellbeing. The Cancer Prehab Hub in the Beacon Centre is where we provide you with access to face to face sessions, group work, and membership to leisure centres around the county.

The programme is supported by our web pages, which explains the service and has a comprehensive collection of supporting

tools available to you. These pages can be found on the Somerset NHS Trust website by clicking on 'Our services (A-Z)' and then on the 'Cancer Services' page.  
[www.somersetft.nhs.uk/cancer/cancer-services/prehab/](http://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/cancer/cancer-services/prehab/)

### 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 that we know are important for health include:

- Moving more and being as active as possible
- Looking after your diet by eating well
- Keeping hydrated by drinking enough fluids, especially water
- Cutting out alcohol or at least minimising your intake
- Stopping smoking or significantly reducing the number of cigarettes
- Using psychological strategies to help manage low mood and worries



## Move more and being active

It is important to be as active as possible as this keeps your heart and lungs strong and will help your body cope better with 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, do a little more. If you are not currently very active or feel you could do more, this is the perfect time to start. Reduced movement is not ideal for our bodies. Our muscles waste away quickly and affects our strength and balance. Hormonal therapy affects testosterone levels which can lead to muscle wasting too.

As part of the programme you will be advised on ways in which you can increase your activity and/or have tailored exercises which may be more beneficial for you.

## Nutrition

Eating a variety of foods from all food groups is beneficial to overall health and wellbeing. This may help you to cope with the symptoms and side-effects of cancer and cancer treatments. As part of the programme you will be advised on ways in which to improve your diet by our Dietetic team if necessary.

## Sleep well

Having sufficient sleep is vital to you remaining healthy. The amount of sleep we need varies from person to person and knowing our individual requirements can help.

## Top tips

- Set up and keep to a bedtime routine allowing time to unwind and relax
- Keep computer and phone screens out of your sleeping space to encourage relaxation
- Warm drinks can help in a bedtime routine avoiding any caffeinated drinks before bed

## Looking after your bladder and bowels

Some cancers and their treatments can cause problems with continence and you may be experiencing bladder or bowel incontinence. This can affect many aspects of your life including personal relationships, sexual relationships, work and social issues.

As part of your prehabilitation you may be referred to a Pelvic Health Physiotherapist who can advise you on pelvic floor rehabilitation and help you to find ways to improve or regain bladder, bowel control and sexual function.

## The emotional impact of cancer

People will experience different emotions following a diagnosis of cancer, during their treatment and beyond. These challenges and life changes will affect those living with the diagnosis, and those close to them, and for many it can feel like being on an emotional rollercoaster.

There is no right or wrong way to feel when you have a cancer diagnosis, and different feelings can show up throughout your cancer journey. What is perhaps most

important is to acknowledge how you are feeling and do the best you can to be kind and compassionate to yourself. Each person is different, so it is good to find out what will support you best with whatever particular worries or challenges you meet along the way.

## Take control for improved outcomes

Evidence shows that actively improving your physical and mental health/wellbeing can help you recover more quickly from radiotherapy and reduce the chance of further problems during and after your treatment, as well as many other benefits.

Going through cancer treatment can feel like a marathon, and you would not run a marathon without training beforehand.

## Further information

To access our website please visit:

[www.somersetft.nhs.uk/cancer/cancer-services/prehab/](http://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/cancer/cancer-services/prehab/)



J Warren/Aug22/review Aug25

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