

Brain CARE in Focus



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Welcome to the fourth edition of the HCT Macmillan Brain CARE Team Newsletter:



Keeping Active!



When you are living with a brain tumour, being active can make a positive change to your life at a time when you may be experiencing physical, mental and emotional effects from the condition and treatment.

‘There is strong evidence to suggest exercise may be an effective way to aid the management of neuro-oncological disorders. Clinical research has established the efficacy of appropriate exercise in counteracting physical impairments such as fatigue and functional decline, cognitive impairment as well as psychological effects including depression and anxiety.’

‘National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) Resources

Individuals living with brain tumours have unique needs and can benefit from a specific exercise programme to maximise movement and safety.

In this edition of **Brain CARE in Focus** we would like to highlight the benefits of taking part in physical activity during and after brain tumour treatment, along with practical advice on how to get started. We provide information on what is available in Hertfordshire to assist, improve and maintain your fitness, health and wellbeing.

Keeping Active during Treatment:

Being physically active can help you manage the side effects of treatment, such as fatigue, muscle wasting and depression.

Macmillan provides advice on [different ways of staying active](#) and information on [walking and mobility problems](#).

If you are not sure about being active during treatment, talk to your specialist nurse or GP or contact the **Macmillan Brain CARE Team!**

Studies have shown that exercising during chemotherapy helps people stay active and can help them feel better.

Useful information and support

Macmillan Brain CARE Team



We are a team of specialist therapists (Allied Health Professionals) working in Hertfordshire.

We support the rehabilitation needs of people living with brain tumours

Macmillan Cancer Support:

Macmillan provide help with keeping active with tips for getting started and activities near you.

Click [here](#) to view the Macmillan You Tube video on Physical Activity and Cancer

Keeping Active—continued..

Set goals that are right for you. This could be walking from room to room, going to the front door, to the garden, or going out for a short walk. Remember to take it slowly and gradually build up.

It might be useful to keep an activity diary to track your progress. Use it to set yourself some short-term goals each week. This way you can look back and hopefully see an improvement in your fitness and the way you are feeling over time.

What to do when treatment ends:

After treatment, leading a healthy lifestyle can help speed up recovery and improve your well-being. This should include regular exercise which you can build up gradually.

Late effects are side effects that may develop months after treatment ends, such as fatigue. Not everyone will get late effects, but being physically active may reduce your risk. Exercise during (and after) treatment has been shown to safely reduce tiredness, increase fitness and enhance your quality of life. Aerobic exercise has been shown to significantly reduce fatigue. Doing something positive for yourself can make you feel more in control.

Physiotherapy:

Physiotherapists help patients with issues that affect their movement and mobility. A physiotherapist can help you to:

- o Complete a personalised exercise programme
- o Become an independent exerciser.
- o Increase your physical fitness.
- o Improve your energy, strength, flexibility, co-ordination and balance.
- o Manage side effects or after effects of treatment.
- o Enjoy physical activity.

Physiotherapists can provide advice and education to patients, family and carers about how to manage and maintain movement and keep you participating in day to day activities. They may provide equipment to help you move around safely.

The **Macmillan Brain CARE Team** can arrange a referral to a physiotherapist.



[brainstrust](#) is a charity that supports brain tumour patients and their families in the UK. There is useful information on [exercise and rest](#) on the website, as well as useful resources on [fatigue management](#).

Tel: 01983 292405



[The Brain Tumour Charity](#)

Read about the benefits of exercise when living with a brain tumour ... as well as the article:

[Staying Active after a Brain Tumour Diagnosis](#)

*Support & Info Line:
0808 800 0004*

Exercise and Complementary Therapies:

Some types of physical activity such as yoga, tai chi and qi gong are designed to work both the body and the mind. They mostly use gentle, controlled movements, with breathing exercises. This can be done by people of all ages and of varying fitness levels. All hospices in Hertfordshire offer exercise programmes and complementary therapies to boost physical and emotional wellbeing:

- [Rennie Grove Hospice](#) in St Albans offer reflexology and reiki, yoga and tai chi as part of their Day Services.
- [Isabel Hospice](#) in Welwyn Garden City offer exercise sessions as part of the *Living Well with Isabel* service.
- [Garden House Hospice in](#) Letchworth offer personalised physiotherapy and exercise programmes following an assessment.
- [Peace Hospice in](#) Watford offer a 'Wednesday' workout, a Friday 'Everyone Active' programme as well as complementary therapies. Check the website for their calendar of activities.
- [The Hospice of St Francis 'Spring Centre'](#) in Berkhamsted have specialist physiotherapists who recommend treatment to improve strength and fitness as well as complementary therapies.

Become more active in Hertfordshire:

Hertfordshire Health Walks:

Free, led walks aim to encourage people of all ages and abilities to get outdoors, get more active and reap the benefits. Search for a Health Walk near you and register as a new walker via the [website](#).

Walks are graded from 'First Steps' - a 20-30 minute walk to 'Grade 4' - longer than 90 minutes approx. 5-6 miles. Hertfordshire Health Walks are co-ordinated by the Countryside Management Service:

Tel: 01992 588433

Email: northeast.cms@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Active Ageing—Hertfordshire Independent Living Services:

Depending on your age (55y & over) you could be referred to: **Hertfordshire Independent Living Services - Active Aging Programme** which provides personalised exercise support for people living in the community. To sign up or find out more:

Tel: 0330 2000 103

<https://hertsindependentliving.org/active-ageing/>



[NHS Live Well](#)

Advice, tips and tools to help you make the best choices about your health and wellbeing, including exercise: - programmes, workouts and tips to get you moving and improve your health and wellbeing!



Hertfordshire Exercise Referral Scheme:

Exercising in a group can keep you more motivated. With this in mind you may want to join an Exercise Referral Scheme.

The Hertfordshire Exercise Referral Scheme has been created to help people with certain medical conditions become more active. Sometimes becoming more active is hard so a team of exercise specialists will help you along that journey by providing support, guidance and motivation. Schemes are generally held at local community centres, healthy living centres, leisure centres and libraries.

Specially trained exercise professionals manage many of these schemes, but it is a good idea to check whether they have been trained to work with people who have brain tumours.

Ask your GP or Health Care Professional about a referral to the Hertfordshire Exercise Referral Scheme.

Once you have a referral form you will need to phone the participating leisure centre of your choice to book your first appointment.

Remember you will need to take your referral form with you to your first appointment!

Please note: Prices are subsidised and can vary; and some schemes may be restricted to specific medical conditions.

Age UK—Fitness Classes:

Age UK classes and clubs focus on gentle exercise to help you regain fitness at your own pace.

If you are used to regular physical activity exercises can be tailored to be more strenuous.

Classes include:

- o Dance
- o Pilates / Yoga
- o Seated exercise
- o Tai Chi
- o Walking Clubs
- o Walking Football

Note: Not all Age UK classes run all classes shown above.

Use the [postcode search](#) on the website to find out what sort of classes your local Age UK has on offer.

Contact **Age UK Hertfordshire**

Tel: 01707 323272

Email: info@ageukherts.org.uk



Carers UK—Keeping Active:

Carers UK focus on making life better for carers.

As a Carer you will find useful advice and practical help to assist you in how to manage your posture, keeping active and treatment for back pain.

Get help and advice:

Helpline—open Monday and Tuesdays 10am—4pm

Tel: 0808 808 7777

Need more inspiration and ideas.....

The team, with help of one our service users have prepared a short video which is an excellent example of keeping active and self motivation.

Have a look at **Nick's Story** and the advice he gives for physical activity, either via the links on:

<https://www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/macmillan-brain-care-team/>
or <https://youtu.be/O-Y IEyJW4?t=38>

“Don't go setting big targets; keep it nice and simple; keep it nice and slow. When you have a week or a day when you're not up to it, do something - little things to keep you occupied through the day; go at your own pace”. Nick, 2019.

Macmillan Brain CARE Team - Service Update:

- **Living Well Event:**
The team ran a very successful education event for healthcare professionals in November 2019 focussed on 'Living Well with Brain Cancer'. The event was very well attended and has provided colleagues with valuable tools needed to support our brain tumour patients out in the community.
- **Brain Tumour Awareness Week:**
We released had a number of patient stories during Brain Tumour Awareness Week highlighting active rehabilitation and self management. You can see some of the links we share if you follow us on twitter @hctbraincare
- **Service extension:**
We are very pleased and grateful to Macmillan to have been awarded a further years funding for the Brain CARE service, meaning we will now be supporting our brain tumour patients until June 2021! During this time we will be making a strong business case to our commissioners that will encourage them to fund this service in the long term. If you can help us make this case, then please get in touch.



The Macmillan Brain CARE Team
welcomes your involvement. If you would like to share your experience of living with a brain tumour and help shape the service we offer, please get in touch:

The Macmillan Brain CARE Team:

Tel: 01727 732038

Email:

hct.braincare@nhs.net

Twitter: @hctbraincare

Would you like the team to contact you so you can share your experiences with us:

[Yes](#)

[No](#)