

Adopting, fostering or not having children after cancer treatment

This information is an extract from the booklet *Fertility – support for young people affected by cancer*. You may find the full booklet helpful. We can send you a free copy – see page 2.

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Adoption and fostering

If medical treatment doesn't feel like the right way for you to become a parent, you might consider adoption or fostering. Single people and same-sex couples can also apply to adopt or foster children. There are many children currently waiting to be adopted and fostered in the UK. This can be a very rewarding way to enjoy family life.

Adoption and fostering are not easy options though, and they're not right for everyone. Many children waiting for adoption or fostering have had to cope with a lot of upset in their lives. They may have many emotional needs and feel insecure.

If you want to find out more about adoption or fostering, ask:

- your social worker (if you have one)
- your local social services department (who should be listed in the phone book, under the name of your local council)
- the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (visit baaf.org.uk or call **020 7421 2600**) has information about adoption and fostering.

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Not having children

You may decide that you don't want to have fertility treatment or adopt or foster a child.

Many people don't have children, either because of cancer, other medical reasons, or simply because the time has never felt right.

Other members of your family or close friends may have children. If possible, you could get involved in their upbringing. You might choose to work with children, for example in teaching, paediatric nursing or social work. Or, you may find you don't need this contact with children. We are all different.

If you feel distressed at any time about not being able to have your own children, there is help available. Organisations such as the Infertility Network UK (visit infertilitynetworkuk.com or call **0800 008 7464**) can help provide emotional support.

More information and support

More than one in three of us will get cancer. For most of us it will be the toughest fight we ever face. And the feelings of isolation and loneliness that so many people experience make it even harder. But you don't have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way.

To order a copy of *Fertility – support for young people affected by cancer* or any other cancer information, visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call 0808 808 00 00.

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