

Getting ready for treatment (prehabilitation)

Prehabilitation means preparing yourself mentally and physically for treatment.

We have separate information to help you **live well with and beyond lymphoma**.

On this page

What is prehabilitation?

How can I get myself ready for treatment?

Benefits of prehabilitation

We have separate information about the topics in **bold font**. Please get in touch if you'd like to request copies or if you would like further information about any aspect of lymphoma. Phone 0808 808 5555 or email information@lymphoma-action.org.uk.

What is prehabilitation?

Prehabilitation means getting your body into the best condition possible to cope well with **treatment**. This includes:

- Good **diet and nutrition**.
- Taking **physical activity and exercise** – even a couple of weeks of **moderate physical activity**, such as walking, gentle cycling or mowing the lawn can improve your physical fitness. Check first with your medical team which types and intensity of exercise are safe for you.
- Looking after your **mental wellbeing** and **managing stress**.

Prehabilitation is all about using the time before you start treatment wisely. It is an opportunity to stop and reflect, a chance to set positive goals and prepare yourself for the journey ahead.
Charlotte Bloodworth, Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Haematology

Depending on your circumstances, prehabilitation could include getting help to **stop smoking** or to **reduce your alcohol intake**. It can also involve managing any other medical conditions, such as **anaemia** and **diabetes**.

The NHS website has advice, information and resources to help you make **healthy lifestyle choices**.

How can I get ready for treatment?

Taking general good care of your physical and mental health can help to prepare you for treatment. Your treatment centre might have information about local services that could help you.

Personalised prehabilitation care plan (PPCP)

Your medical team might suggest a prehabilitation programme before you start treatment. However, in some cases, you might need to start treatment straightaway.

Your medical team work with you to identify your individual prehabilitation needs and advise you on how best to meet these. Sometimes, this is called a 'personalised prehabilitation care plan' (PPCP). Typically, you have an initial assessment so that you and your medical team can work together to identify your needs, make a plan (regime) and set goals for the coming weeks. The regime can last anywhere from a week to 2 months. Often, it lasts around 4 to 6 weeks.

Throughout your prehabilitation, you have regular follow-up appointments to check-in with your medical team, ask any questions you might have, get advice and support.

Benefits of prehabilitation

Prehabilitation can sometimes make more treatment options available to you because some are only suitable if you are well enough to have them.

I joined a local gym as it had a fairly cheap deal on at the time, where I mainly swam about 30 lengths and did spins on the stationary bike. I knew that whatever I might face, being as fit as possible would help. This proved true when the team said I could have the full suite of treatment when otherwise my age might have been against that.

Martin, diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma

Prehabilitation has a number of possible benefits, including:

- a shorter stay in hospital
- fewer **side effects of treatment**
- faster **recovery**
- fewer post-treatment complications
- improved overall physical and mental wellbeing.

My diagnosis and meeting with my consultant was just a week or so before I was due to go on holiday and I was worried that I might have to miss it. However, my consultant said I should go on holiday, enjoy myself and come back ready to start treatment. The holiday was really good and a chance to relax after the previous worrying weeks with tests. It gave me chance to mentally prepare.

Helen, diagnosed with follicular lymphoma

Macmillan Cancer Support have published a report: **Principles and guidance for prehabilitation within the management and support of people with cancer**, which is available to download. The report outlines three key benefits of prehabilitation for people diagnosed with cancer and their caregivers:

- A sense of empowerment, purpose and control.
- Greater physical and psychological wellbeing, which might reduce **side effects of treatment**. In turn, this can help you to live as fully as possible before, during and **after treatment**.
- Positive long-term health benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle.

You can **download the full report from the Macmillan Cancer Support website**.

References

The full list of references for this page is available on our website. Alternatively, email publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk or call 01296 619409 if you would like a copy.

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✓	Evidence-based
✓	Approved by experts
✓	Reviewed by users

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