

## 31. Housework or Shopping

If you normally have a lot of energy, feeling tired all the time can be difficult. It isn't easy, but it is worth trying to make a few changes to your daily life so that you don't get too exhausted. If you are over tired, you may be more likely to feel sick and you will probably find it more difficult to cope. Listen to your body and rest if you need to.

Try and restrict your activities. Do only what is necessary at the time.

Ask your family or friends to help with housework/ shopping if possible.

Have your shopping delivered if you can.

Your local Dietetic Department may also be able to suggest ways of preparing and accessing nutritious meals

If your needs are more complex a Social Work referral may be needed

A social worker has responsibility for assessing what practical and social help you may need. If you don't already have a social worker, the GP or a nurse involved in the care of you can arrange a referral. Or you could contact the local social services department.

Once the social worker has carried out an assessment, the local authority will decide whether or not they will provide or arrange the services that are needed. Each local authority has its own eligibility criteria, so the services that are provided will vary from area to area.

If the local authority agrees that your needs are high, it has a duty to provide services to meet those needs. Services that can be provided by social services or arranged to be given by other organisations, such as charities, include:

- meals on wheels /frozen meal service
- home care (home-helpers and personal care assistants)
- sitting service (someone to sit with the person with cancer while you have some time to yourself)
- equipment and adaptations to your home
- benefits advice
- laundry service
- holidays

Some services will be paid for by the NHS, so they will be free of charge. In other cases, social services will do a financial assessment to calculate whether you have to make any financial contribution.

The social worker will stay in touch with you once the various services have been set up, to check that the arrangements are working and that your needs haven't changed.

As well as arranging services to meet your needs, many social workers are trained in counselling skills and can offer you emotional support.

### Home care

There are different ways you can get help at home. Home care workers who provide this support have differing roles depending on what they do.

**Care assistants** usually provide help with things like housework and shopping.

**Personal care assistants** usually provide help with tasks such as washing and dressing people, although they may also help out with housework and shopping if asked.

In many areas, home care is now mainly concerned with personal care tasks. If you only need help with the housework and shopping, it may be provided by social services through an agency, or you may have to make independent arrangements.

You may be asked to make a contribution towards the cost of this kind of help, if you can.

If you can afford it, you can get private domestic help by contacting a cleaning agency, or by putting an advertisement in a local paper or shop window.

If there is no local service, Macmillan will sometimes give grants to cover the cost of a private home-help.

### **Care attendant**

A care attendant is a trained person who can come into your home and give a range of help including light housework, help with washing and dressing, sitting with the person you are caring for, or simply chatting to both of you. In some cases, a care attendant can stay overnight, letting you sleep undisturbed.

Care attendant schemes are run by voluntary organisations, health services, social services or a combination of these.

You may have to pay for a care attendant if you can afford it.

To find out more about having a care attendant, ask the GP, district nurse or social worker. You could also contact, a national organisation that runs care attendant schemes. In some areas, there is a waiting list for getting help from a care attendant, so it's worth asking as soon as you think you might need one.

### **Laundry service**

If you have to wash a lot of linen, the social services department may be able to help by providing a laundry service, or you may be able to get a grant for laundry charges. Ask the district nurse, GP or social worker about this.