



HARRY PERKINS INSTITUTE  
OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

# YOUR SMALL GUIDE WITH A BIG IMPACT

A cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming for patients and their loved ones who want nothing more than to offer support. That's why we've created this small guide with plenty of help from our friends.

We asked hundreds of Perkins supporters to share their best advice for offering help to someone with cancer. Here are some of the most popular and helpful suggestions for you:

## THINGS TO DO



- You can provide transport to appointments and wait with them. It may even help to take notes that they can refer to later.
- Take care of a pet temporarily by bringing it to your home or ensuring it receives regular exercise, food and water.
- Cooking a dinner that you can share together during a visit. Don't forget to bring plenty extra that can be easily reheated at a later date.
- You can help with childcare by transporting children to after-school activities or offering to take care of the children during appointments.
- If you have a green thumb, you can help to stay on-top of the garden and care for any indoor plants.

## THINGS TO SAY

- Cancer is just a word and NOT a sentence.
- I'm sorry you have to go through this. I'll be with you all the way.
- I'm here for you and I'd like to help by...
- Would you like some company? Do you feel up to going for a walk or a drive?
- When you feel like crying or venting, call me.

## GIFT IDEAS

- Magazines, a good book or vouchers for e-readers can all help pass the time.
- Photo albums can help people during long hospital stays. Don't forget to keep adding new pictures when you visit so they don't miss the moments that matter right now.
- Herbal teas and sugar-free cordials help to increase water intake.
- Hand cream, lip balm and skin moisturiser help to retain moisture during treatment and recovery.
- A warm blanket or slippers can bring comfort to a person undergoing treatment or recovering at home.

## ALWAYS REMEMBER

- People with cancer are likely to feel frightened or emotional and you may see changes in their behaviour. Always be kind, thoughtful and supportive. Above all, listen.
- Stories and comparisons of other people with cancer can be scary and unhelpful, even when well-intended.
- If you are not a medical professional, you shouldn't offer medical advice. However you can help a person seek more information, a second opinion or specialist services if they wish to.