

“HOW CAN I HELP?”



A child's cancer diagnosis is devastating. It turns a family's life upside down. "Is there anything I can do?" is the most natural question in the world. But when parents are in such an overwhelming situation, they may struggle to think of an answer.

Supporting young cancer patients and their families, is what we do every day at CLIC Sargent. In our conversations with parents, we've asked them what kind of help they appreciate most. We've gathered some of their ideas for you here.

“THE LITTLEST THING HELPS, LIKE WALKING THE DOG, DOING THE WASHING...”

**YOUNG LIVES
vs CANCER
CLIC SARGENT**

MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM

Parents may not know where to start when they are offered help. So make a specific offer, like collecting the other children from school on Tuesday. This approach gives parents one less thing to think about. Cancer treatment can go on a long time, sometimes years, so keep the offers of help coming.

10 WAYS TO HELP

Parents tell us they deeply appreciate the support they receive from family and friends. It doesn't have to be a grand gesture – the little things mean a lot. Here are some of the ways you can help make life a little easier at a difficult time.

“FOUR MONTHS IN I’M STILL GETTING REGULAR ‘THINKING OF YOU’ TEXTS. IT GIVES ME A REAL BOOST AT THE END OF A LONG DAY.”

1. Let them know you're thinking of them

Whether it's in person, on the phone, Skype, or online – keep in touch. Knowing that you care really matters. They might not be able to reply but reassure them that you don't expect a response.

2. Help with the other children

Can you collect their other children from school or nursery, babysit, or have them stay overnight? Having a child in hospital can upset the family routine, and offers of childcare will not only help practically, but could offer siblings some distraction and fun. Parents often worry about siblings feeling left out, so outings and small presents can mean a lot.

“OUR FRIENDS GOT TOGETHER AND COOKED HOME-MADE MEALS. THE FOOD WAS DELIVERED TO THE DOOR EVERY MONDAY, FOR MONTHS – SUCH PRACTICAL HELP.”

3. Feed the family

If you can shop for groceries or prepare some home-cooked meals, that's one less worry for parents. Meals that can be frozen and reheated later can be especially helpful.

4. Give them a lift

There might be a lot of travelling between home and hospital, which gets tiring and expensive. Offering a lift could help take pressure off and give them some welcome company.

5. Treat them

At the hospital, the cost of meals, drinks and things like magazines can add up quickly. Find out what shops or restaurants are in or near the hospital, and buy a gift card.

6. Help with chores

When someone in the family is seriously ill, chores take a back seat. Offer to do some housework or gardening, walk the dog or run a few errands.

7. Handle the updates

Handling questions can be draining for parents, especially as they can feel they're repeating the same information again and again. You could offer to make phone calls, answer emails or provide updates on social media. Check with parents what information they're happy for you to share.

8. Make a care package

Parents tend to put their own needs last when their child is seriously ill. Why not create a gift parcel with a personal touch? Some nice toiletries and hand cream, or a box of healthy snacks, could be much appreciated. For the child, send several small gifts, which can be unwrapped as treats when they need a boost to help them face tests or treatment.

9. Give them a break

Once in a while, parents just need to get away for a little bit. If you're visiting the hospital, persuade them to go for a walk, pop to the shops or have a coffee, while you sit with their child. Going to a film, a football match or for a walk in the park are a few ways to cheer someone up. Choose something they'll enjoy and keep them company.

"WE WERE IN HOSPITAL FOR FIVE WEEKS, AND WHEN WE RETURNED HOME SOMEONE HAD COME ROUND AND TIDIED THE GARDEN AND DONE THE LAWN – IT WAS SUCH A WONDERFUL GESTURE."

10. Do some fundraising!

Fundraising can be a great way to show support for the family. Whatever you like doing, there are many ways you can help raise money for children and young people with cancer. From running events and coffee mornings, to raising vital funds through schools, there is something for everyone. CLIC Sargent is a registered charity. We rely almost entirely on voluntary donations, and you can support us in our mission to change what it means to be diagnosed with cancer when you're young.



CLIC Sargent is funded by voluntary donations. So have a cake sale, get your employer to make us charity of the year, start training for that marathon or just sign-up to donate a small amount regularly. Our website has lots of brilliant ideas on how to get involved.



ABOUT CLIC SARGENT

CLIC Sargent is the UK's leading cancer charity for children and young people, and their families. Our specialist care teams can provide practical, emotional and financial support. We are there from diagnosis onwards and aim to help the whole family deal with the impact of cancer and its treatment, life after treatment and, in some cases, bereavement.

TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP,
0300 330 0803
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