

What's CanTeen all about?

A guide for parents and carers



We get it

CanTeen understands that when cancer crashes into a family's world, it can turn everything upside down.

Cancer is the last thing anyone wants in their life, but now that it's here, we can help you deal with it.

This booklet tells you a bit about us and our services, how it all works and we've also got some tips and tools for you as parents, because we know this is just as overwhelming for you as it is for your child or children.

About CanTeen

CanTeen is a national charity that has been supporting young people affected by cancer for more than thirty years.

We work with 12-25 year-olds who are dealing with:

- having cancer themselves
- a parent, brother or sister's cancer
- the death of a parent, brother or sister

CanTeen's specially trained staff help young people develop the skills and resilience they need to cope with the impact cancer is having on their life.

Through CanTeen, young people affected by cancer can also connect with others their age who are in the same boat and have some much needed fun too.



Our Services

There's no one size fits all at CanTeen. We work with each young person individually to work out what sort of support will help them the most and our services are completely free.

Our work is underpinned by CanTeen's leading edge research into the social and emotional impacts of cancer and everything we do is thoroughly evaluated to ensure we continue to provide the best possible support for young people affected by cancer.



Counselling

CanTeen counsellors give young people a safe space to talk about difficult thoughts and feelings and help them develop skills for handling these. We understand that sadness, anxiety and grief don't stick to business hours so neither do we. Online and phone counselling is available seven days a week over extended hours and young people can also meet a counsellor face to face at most CanTeen offices.

Online support

CanTeen provides a secure online community just for young people dealing with cancer where they can connect and share experiences using blogs, forums and videos. They can also chat to a counsellor seven days a week using instant messaging or email. Visit canteen.org.au/join.

Peer support

Through CanTeen, young people affected by cancer can meet and be supported by others their age who truly understand what they're going through. They can connect through our online community 24/7 or attend CanTeen Camps (ranging from 2 - 5 days) or Recreation Days (1/2 to full day).



What happens on a CanTeen Camp?

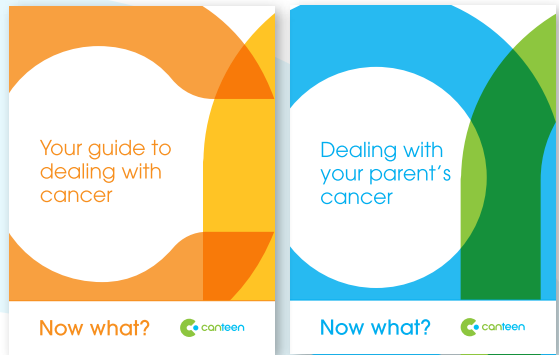
CanTeen programs like our Camps and Recreation Days give young people the opportunity to make new friends, develop skills to cope with cancer and have a lot of fun at the same time.

All our programs are facilitated by highly skilled staff and volunteers to ensure your children have a safe and enjoyable time.

If you have any questions about what to expect on programs, please call your local Division staff for a chat.

Information and advice

CanTeen's website has information and advice about the challenges young people face, from how to talk to friends about cancer to what all the medical jargon means. We also have a wide range of free resources available to order or download at canteen.org.au/resource.



Youth Cancer Services

If your son or daughter is 15-25 and has been diagnosed with cancer, specialist age-appropriate treatment and support is available through the hospital-based Youth Cancer Services (YCS). The YCS receive federal funding through CanTeen as well as state and territory government funding. To find out more or to get a referral to the YCS, speak to your child's GP or oncologist, your local CanTeen office or visit youthcancer.com.au.

Leadership development

CanTeen is passionate about empowerment and is proud to have young people providing direction and advice at all levels of the organisation, including the Board of Directors. If your child is keen to get involved, encourage them to speak to their Division office staff.

How does it all work?

OK, so you're thinking that CanTeen sounds great. Now what?

As a first step, one of our qualified youth support staff (we call them Psychosocial Support Workers) will meet with your son or daughter and introduce them to CanTeen. They'll also ask a bunch of questions to find out how cancer is affecting them and to work out which services they might want to start using (we call this a Psychosocial Assessment and Review Process). We'll also repeat the process about six months down the track as a way of checking that the support they're getting is helping them cope.

A young person can choose to participate in any or all of the services we offer and we will seek consent to keep family and carers informed and involved wherever we feel it might benefit that young person.

How you can help

A cancer diagnosis really shakes the foundations of a young person's life. Not knowing what the outcome of treatment will be, young people are confronted - often for the first time - with their own or a close family member's mortality, which feels incredibly scary and overwhelming.

On top of that, cancer frequently causes many aspects of a young person's 'normal life' to change. They might:

- feel isolated from their friends
- find themselves struggling to keep up at school, uni or work
- worry about changes in their appearance if they are the one having treatment (such as hair loss or scarring), as well as future fertility, and whether the cancer might come back.

Young people often try to 'stay strong', so it might not be obvious that your son or daughter is struggling. You can help by:

- Maintaining open communication - keep family members informed as much as possible
- Helping your son or daughter to communicate - encourage them to express what they're feeling and needing
- Preserving family time and relationships as best you can - spend time engaging in activities you all enjoy
- Connecting them with CanTeen - encourage them to join the online community or speak to one of our lovely staff members online or face to face
- Remembering to take time out to look after yourself

Support for you

Whether you're dealing with your own cancer, your partner's or your child's, this is a really tough time for you. We know through research and because of what young people have told us that families do better when they can speak openly about feelings and concerns. Sometimes accessing professional counselling support can help this process.

When the family as a whole is coping better, young people are more able to deal with the challenges that cancer brings. That's why we involve families wherever we can.

Some specific services for parents and carers include:

- Cancer Council
Visit cancercouncil.com.au
or call 13 11 20
- Breast Cancer Network Australia
Visit bcna.org.au
or call 1800 500 258

For carers and families:

- Carers Australia
Visit carersaustralia.com.au
or call 1800 242 636
- Beyond Blue
Visit beyondblue.org.au
or call 1300 22 4636

If you are considering accessing support for yourself, please feel free to speak with a CanTeen staff member or contact your GP.



Contact us

Call 1800 835 932

Email support@canteen.org.au

Local Division offices

ACT and Southern NSW: (02) 6101 2207

Hunter and Northern NSW: (02) 4906 1122

Northern Territory: (08) 8985 2013

Queensland: (07) 3108 1444

North Queensland: (07) 4700 5636

South Australia: (08) 8122 6492

Sydney and Central NSW: (02) 9007 0190

Tasmania: (03) 6200 5551

Victoria: (03) 9912 4221

Western Australia: (08) 6260 7771

You can also connect with CanTeen on social media

-  facebook.com/CanTeenAus
-  [@CanTeenAus](https://twitter.com/CanTeenAus)
-  youtube.com/canteenaustralia
-  [@canteen_au](https://instagram.com/canteen_au)

