



canteen



What's CanTeen all about?

A guide for parents & carers when
cancer impacts your family

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 organisation that has been supporting young people impacted by cancer for more than three decades.

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

- a parent, brother or sister's cancer
- having cancer themselves
- 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.

I got a call back for a routine mammogram. That's how it all started. I was told it was 90 per cent likely I had breast cancer. Two days later, it was confirmed.

My children Sally, Michael and Liam were 14, 12 and nine at the time. It affected them all differently.

It was after my first chemo session when all my children first realised that their parents are fragile – we're not invincible.

I collapsed from dehydration, but with my eyes open, so they all thought I was dead. I had to go back to the (Chris O'Brien) Lifehouse to be rehydrated, and it was the lovely nurse there, Keith, who told us about CanTeen.

I strongly recommend getting involved with CanTeen to any family battling cancer. Because the thing is, when you're diagnosed with cancer, it's as if everyone around you starts talking in a different language. But CanTeen is like a translation service for teenagers – it allows them to communicate at their own level in language that is age appropriate and applicable to them.

As for now? I feel well. I am braver. And I am fearless. Because you know, what's the worst that could happen in this life? The worst did happen, and I got through it.

Mary – mother of 3.



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.



Recreation & events

CanTeen offers a variety of free programs tailored to a young person's cancer experience and age. They are an opportunity to make new friends, develop skills to cope with cancer and have some much needed fun too. Our events range from summer retreats, to adventure & surf camps along with local activities such as movie nights, self care or art therapy workshops, and many other options. canteenconnect.org.au/events



Online support

CanTeen Connect is a secure, online community where young people dealing with cancer can connect to others in a similar situation and share experiences using blogs and discussions. They can also chat instantly to a counsellor seven days a week and find useful youth-specific resources and information on cancer. canteenconnect.org.au



Youth friendly 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. canteen.org.au/resource



Counselling

CanTeen counsellors are specially trained to understand the challenges cancer brings and will help develop strategies for young people to deal with the impact cancer is having on their life.

Support is available seven days a week. Phone, email and online counselling through CanTeen Connect is available 10am-10pm AEST weekdays and 11am-6pm AEST weekends.

Face to face counselling is available at most CanTeen offices, during normal business hours with scheduled after hour sessions also offered. To speak with a CanTeen counsellor visit canteenconnect.org.au or call **1800 835 932**



Access to live music

Created by Australian band Hilltop Hoods and now proudly led by CanTeen, Side of Stage gives young people impacted by cancer free access to some of the country's best live music gigs, festivals and experiences. sideofstage.org.au



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). 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 local CanTeen staff.



When mum was diagnosed, I didn't know how to react because all I knew about cancer was that people died from it. I was scared for her and didn't want to lose her. These were the only things going through my head, all day, every day. CanTeen helped me cope. If it wasn't for CanTeen, I don't think I'd be the person I am today.

Oli, aged 17.

How to support your child

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 – keeping 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
- Give CanTeen a call to discuss support options for your child. If they seem hesitant, encourage them to check out our online community for young people impacted by cancer. **canteenconnect.org.au**
- Remembering to take time out to look after yourself

For more useful information on parenting and cancer, visit parents.canteenconnect.org.au

Parenting through cancer: CanTeen supports you too

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 and provide supports for parents too:



CanTeen Connect for Parents

An online community where parents impacted by cancer can connect with each other, find evidence-based information and chat to a counsellor. parents.canteenconnect.org.au



Parenting through cancer

This booklet provides practical advice and tips to parents impacted by cancer on communicating and supporting their children through cancer. Available in print and online. canteen.org.au/resource



Locally based in person counselling

Concentrates on the parenting challenges cancer can bring and is focused on skills building and communication in the family. For CanTeen office phone numbers, please see the back page of this booklet.

Other specific services for parents, carers and families:

Cancer Council 13 11 20 | cancerCouncil.com.au

Breast Cancer Network Australia 1800 500 253 | bcna.org.au

Carers Australia 1800 242 636 | carersaustralia.com.au

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 | beyondblue.org.au

Next Steps:

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

1. Give your local CanTeen office a call (see phone numbers below) and we will answer any questions you have.
 - Our qualified youth support workers will meet with your child and introduce them to CanTeen. They'll ask a bunch of questions to find out how cancer is affecting them to work out which services they might want to start using.
2. Encourage your child to explore our online community CanTeen Connect. Here they can chat to other young people, share experiences and check out our latest events and programs in their area. Visit canteenconnect.org.au
3. You might like to visit CanTeen Connect for Parents, where you can connect to other parents impacted by cancer, chat to a counsellor and find helpful information on parenting and cancer. parents.canteenconnect.org.au

Call: 1800 835 932

Email: support@canteen.org.au

Website: canteen.org.au

Local CanTeen offices

ACT and Southern NSW: (02) 6101 2207

Hobart: (03) 6200 5556

Hunter and Northern NSW: (02) 4906 1122

Launceston: (03) 61354310

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

Victoria: (03) 9912 4221

Western Australia: (08) 6260 7771

