You can never underestimate the enormous value of love, friendship and support when it comes to living with cancer. When someone is first diagnosed it can be overwhelming. As a friend or family member it’s sometimes hard to know what to do or how to help. That’s why we’ve put together this booklet.

It’s full of little things you can do that make a big difference – whether it’s practical tips to make life a little easier, healthy eating advice or tackling the tricky questions cancer so often brings up. All different ways to let someone know you’re here today and here tomorrow.

Make mealtimes easy by taking round a pre-prepared dish. Choose something that is simple to reheat. And don’t forget to check what family members will and won’t eat.

Volunteer to give the primary carer time off. Arrange a massage day or a meal with friends, offer to babysit or do the school drop-off. Small things are often the most helpful.

Make sure there’s always food in the fridge. Next time you’re headed to the supermarket send a text and ask if there’s anything they need you to pick up.

Lend a hand with the housework. Put on a load of laundry, do the washing up or run a vacuum round the house. A quick clean up means one less thing to worry about.

Answers to questions nobody wants to ask.

Q: If I’ve had one cancer, do I have a greater risk of getting another? A: Your risk increases slightly because of the treatment for the initial cancer. Radiotherapy can sometimes damage healthy cells as well as killing cancer cells. But the risk is very small.

Q: Do age and fitness affect my chances of surviving? A: Cancer doesn’t discriminate by age. We can’t predict who gets which grade cancer at what age. However if you’re young and fit you’ll have a stronger immune system, which will help you cope with treatment.

Q: Which cancers are hereditary? A: There are genes that make you more susceptible. The link is strongest for bowel and stomach cancers. If this gene is passed on you have an increased risk but it doesn’t mean you’ll develop that cancer.

Q: Will cancer affect my chances of conceiving? A: Some types of chemotherapy and radiotherapy can affect your fertility. Prior to treatment it may be possible to store sperm or freeze eggs or ovarian tissue. Talk to your doctor about your options.

Q: Which cancers have the best survival rate? A: If a cancer can be removed early you’re more likely to survive. Testicular and prostate cancer have the best survival rate. For women it’s breast and uterine cancer. GI cancers have some of the lowest survival rates in Australia.

Talking to children about cancer.

Cancer is never easy to talk about. Especially with children. Your initial reaction may be to protect them from the news. But secrecy can often make things worse. Honest, open conversations can help little ones cope. If you’re getting ready to talk to your child, consider these five tips:

1. Assess their understanding: You may want to start by finding out what your child knows about cancer. This will help you know how much to tell them.

2. Minimise detail: Children usually don’t want a lot of detail. Try to keep explanations simple and then ask if they have any questions.

3. Reassure them: Many children feel guilty about their parent’s diagnosis. Reassure them that it is not their fault.

4. Welcome questions: As time goes by children will have more questions. Always be honest in your answers and don’t be afraid to admit when you don’t know.

5. Be open about emotions: Always encourage your children to share what they’re feeling with you. Let them know it’s OK to be angry, sad or scared.

Keeping healthy.

Science suggests that the food you eat may play a role in decreasing your risk of developing cancer. For example eating a lot of flavonoid-rich foods such as celery and artichokes can reduce your risk of contracting pancreatic cancer.

And the vitamin C found in oranges protects you from the cancer-causing agents responsible for many stomach and colon cancers. Pectin in apples nourishes your intestinal lining, making it more resistant to cancer; while oats are rich in the dietary fibres that reduce gastrointestinal carcinogens.

On the back page are delicious recipes full of these nutritious foods.
**Sweet Potato Soup**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 leeks, halved, washed and sliced
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 long red chilli, deseeded and chopped
- 800g sweet potato, peeled and cubed
- 600g carrots, chopped
- 5 cups salt-reduced vegetable stock
- 1/3 cup coriander leaves, chopped
- 1/3 cup light thickened cream

**Method:**
1. Heat oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan over medium-high heat. Add leek and cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes or until soft. Add cumin, cinnamon and chilli. Cook, stirring, for 30 seconds.
2. Add potato and carrot. Stir to coat in leek mixture. Add stock, cover and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Remove pan from heat.
3. Blend or process soup, in batches, until smooth. Return to pan over low heat until warmed through. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in coriander. Spoon into bowls and drizzle with cream. Serve with crusty bread.

**Creamy Salmon Gnocchi (serves 4)**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 (about 400g) skinless salmon fillets
- 500g potato gnocchi
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 cup frozen broad beans, thawed and peeled
- ¾ cup light sour cream
- 1 tbsp chopped dill

**Method:**
1. Heat a large frying pan over medium heat. Rub oil over the salmon. Cook for 4 minutes each side or until cooked to your liking. Transfer to a plate.
2. Cook the gnocchi in a saucepan of salted boiling water until al dente. Drain.
3. Flake the salmon into large pieces. Heat the frying pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and broad beans. Cook for 30 seconds.
4. Add the gnocchi, salmon and sour cream and toss to combine. Cook, tossing for 1 minute or until the mixture is heated through. Top with dill and serve.

**Couscous salad**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2.5 cups chicken broth
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 300 grams snow peas
- 5 onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup peanuts
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Dash of hot pepper sauce

**Method:**
1. Sauté 1/2 teaspoon garlic, add 1 tablespoon each of lemon juice and chicken broth.
2. Bring to boil and add couscous. Cover pot, remove from heat. Let sit 5 minutes, fluff with fork and add parsley. Set aside to cool.
3. When cool, add snow peas, onions, peanuts, and cranberries.
4. For dressing, mix together remaining 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic and 3 tablespoons lemon juice, oil, and hot sauce. Toss the dressing with the couscous mixture.

**Easy banana bread**

**Ingredients:**
- 230 grams of reduced-fat cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 medium bananas, mashed
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 large egg whites
- 2 cups biscuit baking mix
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

**Method:**
1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9x5x3-inch loaf pan with non stick cooking spray.
2. In a mixing bowl, cream together cream cheese and sugar until light. Beat in bananas, egg and egg whites. Stir in biscuit mix and cinnamon until just blended. Turn into prepared loaf pan.
3. Bake 45 minutes to 1 hour, until toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean. Cool in pan 15 minutes.