

**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Jess's bone marrow donation. A children's guide to bone marrow donation (January 2018)**

Leicester: Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group, 2018. 22pp.

**Average star rating 4.5 (out of 5)**

**Macmillan Cancer Support  
89 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7UQ**

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This beautifully written book covers all aspects of bone marrow donation without being overwhelming and scary. It allows a child to understand why they might not be able to get close to their relative, without upsetting them. It will be useful for parents to explain what is happening, when explanations can sometimes be hard to find.

It's in plain, simple language designed for children and looks beautiful, attractive and interactive. I like that the child can write their own details in the book to help them remember important things. It can then become something to remember the good thing they did. If a parent is reading this book to their child, the names of the characters could be changed to make it personal.

**Child Psychologist (26-35) (June 2019)**

### **The following reviews are of an earlier edition (2014)**

This well-written booklet gives information in a way that children can understand, helping to make the process easier for any child donating bone marrow. It will be very useful throughout the process and when they get home. It is attractive, simple and easy to understand – the language is great for young children. I like the cover and illustrations – bold, clear, friendly – and that it can be personalised at the front.

I really like that the very brave thing Jess is about to do is well told and explained. I hope that every child having this treatment can have a copy to set their mind at rest.

**Breast cancer patient with six grandchildren (46-55) (December 2017)**

This is appropriate for children from six to 12 but could be used with younger children if a parent selects smaller passages of information. It is most useful before treatment as it outlines the procedure and hospital stay, which is likely to be a worry especially as the donor is not sick. It is very useful for adults preparing children to be donors.

It is well told and logical but biased towards facts – there is not a great deal of story as such. More could be made of the story element especially Jess's relationship to Ben. This is not mentioned and although adults will assume a relationship, this will not be apparent to most children, especially younger ones. It will help children not to

get the wrong idea about being donors, i.e. who is it for. The medical terms are well explained, and I like the look of the book; the pictures are particularly appealing to younger children. I am not sure about the cover; I understand the need to introduce children the world of illness and hospitals at a young age so that it happens naturally, but I wonder if the cover is ideal... I am in two minds here.

I like the lovely illustrations inside and clear descriptions of what will happen, the smiley doctors and nurses and particularly page 21, which shows Jess waving to Ben – this underlines the important part Jess has played. I recommend it, but on the assumption that it will be shared with an appropriate and caring adult.

**Kidney cancer patient, retired primary teacher (66-75) (January 2016)**



This is part of a series for children with siblings who have cancer or for those with cancer and their families. It is a book that would be given to a child by the hospital before a procedure is about to happen. It has that tell-tale look about it.

It explains honestly and clearly what happens, using language and explanations that are easy to understand and not platitudinous, but aimed at younger children. For this reason, it is a book to be shared by adults and children, rather than read by a child alone. There are places where the child can personalise the book. The pages are brightly coloured, and the font is a good size, but I am not keen on the illustrations.

I certainly learnt a lot from this book, so I am sure that children and their families would too, but also be reassured about the procedure and after care.

**Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) and former teacher of 3-16-year-olds with SEN (46-55) (January 2018)**

**The following reviews are of an earlier edition (2009)**



This is a glossy and colourful book. The text is nicely broken up and it is written in plain English, for the younger reader. It is practical, with suggestions of what to bring in to hospital. It is gently reassuring – "you may find it helps to talk about these feelings". There are talking points, such as, "What will you have to eat the night before the operation?". I particularly like the "It is now the doctors' and nurses' job to look after them" and "Well done for being a bone marrow donor!" It's important that their involvement is recognised and that they realise that it's not their job to look after the patient – children may feel a sense of responsibility for the recipient.

**Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (February 2010)**



This is a colourful book for children who need an explanation of what is going to happen prior to a bone marrow transplant. It is easy to understand, and medical terms are explained. It can be read by a child on their own or with a parent. I like the fact that it shows different ways things can be done e.g. the anaesthetic.

In some pictures, the little girl's slide is on a different side and she is also wearing it when she goes into theatre. Children pick up on small things and this could confuse them about what they can or cannot wear in hospital. On page 13 the pictures do not match all the words, which is a little confusing.

**Childhood cancer survivor (36-45) (May 2011)**

# Further information

## Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

## Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

## Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

**We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.**

**For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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