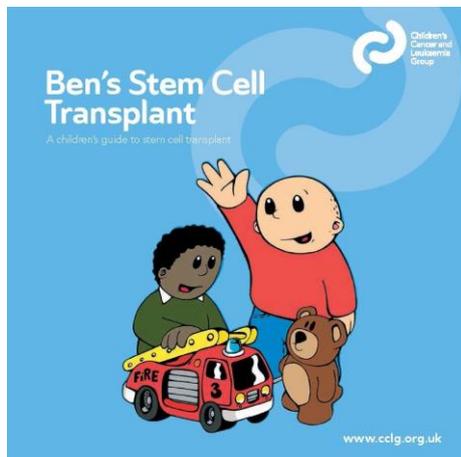


**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Ben's stem cell transplant. A children's guide to donor (allogeneic) stem cell transplant (2017)**

Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group.

Leicester: CCLG, June 2017.

28pp.

Free.

**Average star rating 4.7 (out of 5)**

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This is an excellent resource for children up to about the age of seven who need a stem cell transplant, their parents, or other family members. In addition, anyone who knows or has contact with them would benefit from reading it, for example teachers, health professionals, therapists, and social workers. It is best read as and when a child is told (s)he will need a stem cell transplant, probably over a few days when their treatment is being planned; it could be overwhelming all at once.

It is a wonderful, engaging story, very easy to read, clear and logical, with excellent use of medical terms. The topic explained in an age-appropriate manner; it is not scary, but very informative. I have only one small comment: at the end, it mentions friends not being allowed round if they have an "infection"; this is a scary word for a child, "ill" or "poorly" would be better.

This informative and factual book is beautifully written and illustrated. What I really like is the accurate information is given to the child. It is not frightening, and the pace of the book allows the child to understand it. There are opportunities for children to add comments (e.g. the names of medical staff) and to go and find out specific information about their own transplant, they can personalise the book to their own experience, a bit like a diary or blog. It will help a child to fully consider what an SCT involves and will be helpful and reassuring for a child's family, friends, and teachers.

**Carer (36-45) December 2018**

This is a brilliant booklet for any child about to have a stem cell transplant. It will be most useful when the child knows that they need a stem cell transplant, but also throughout the entire process. The child will really be able to feel that this book is meant for them as there are sections where they, or an adult, can write in personal details, treatment, doctors' and nurses' names, and other information.

It is written in a very friendly, informative manor that a child can relate to and it is very easy to understand; the language is very appropriate for young children. It also has lots of useful follow-up information on life after treatment. It is bold and simply illustrated. It feels friendly. I love the way that it is interactive, and each child can personalise their treatment.

This is a fantastic, well written resource. I love the way that the child can make this book their own. They can add their name, age, hospital, transplant date, hospital staff and tests done. I would really like to think that every child who must go through this treatment could receive their own copy.

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



This is a book that would, I imagine, be given to a child about to undergo a stem cell transplant to explain what is likely to happen. It's a very reassuring book that gives a clear, but not patronising, account of treatment and possible side effects and what to do about them. It is best read before treatment.

The story has very clear and simple explanations of what could happen. However, there seems to be a difference of opinion as to parts of the treatment compared to Ruby's stem cell transplant where she was told that she could have her bone marrow treatment in hospital but go home in between.

It is very easy to understand but not a book to be read by a child until they are older; an adult or older child could read it to a young child. The presentation of the book looks like what it is: a book about cancer. I suppose this is ok, but it would be better (in my opinion) if there was more of an attempt to disguise this by making it look more like a "real" picture book. There is space in the front for the child to write his/her name and then to personalise it further, so it really becomes theirs.

I like the honesty and frankness of this book. The information is clear and, as an adult, I learnt a lot.

**Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) (46-44) (January 2018)**

**The following reviews are of earlier editions**



This book goes a long way to explaining what will happen when a bone marrow transplant is necessary. I recommend it to young patients, their siblings and their school friends as an excellent resource. The book is written in a very simple way, the illustrations and general mood of the book are light hearted, and I think it would prepare a child for what is to come without frightening them.

**Relative of young child with cancer (46-55) (June 2011)**

An excellent book to prepare a younger child for this procedure. I particularly like that it says: "It is really important to tell the nurses if you feel sick, so they can try to help you"; and "Everyone feels differently about coming in to hospital. Do you feel excited, nervous, happy frightened?". It provides a great opportunity to help a young child talk about feelings they are struggling with. Perhaps there could be a page on feelings to explain that some days they may be sad or angry. Also (p. 21) it says, "The nurses and doctors will know when you are ready to go out of the cubicle by checking your count"; count of what? But it's easy to criticise something after the hard work has been done and I hope it's taken as constructive criticism of an excellent resource.

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



This will be useful as soon as a child is told they will need a bone marrow transplant. It is easy for a parent to read to a child. However, there is too much text and no glossary, although most words are explained in the text. The cover is colourful and basic. On page 6, the pictures and words don't match up and are confusing and muddled. It is difficult to work out which picture goes with which test and therefore difficult to point these out to a child who may want questions answered.

**Childhood cancer survivor (36-45) (January 2012)**

**The following reviews were written before we introduced a star rating system.**

My little girl's aunt found this booklet very interesting as it describes in basic terms what happens. It is bright and colourful with a good layout and fun illustrations. It's easy to understand and is short but very informative. It makes the whole process seem less scary. Actual experience may vary from that described, for example, some children have a Hickman line put in for chemotherapy before the transplant.

**Parent of a child who has had a successful bone marrow transplant (36-45) (May 2009)**

This small, short book is well written with colourful, child-appropriate illustrations. It follows Ben from an initial visit, through pre-treatment, to after treatment. It is easy to understand and explains all the issues. Children can personalise the book and feel it is special to them. It is also interactive in places, which will appeal to many children. It could be read in one go, even if the child feels ill and has a short concentration span. Words are explained as they are used, but children younger than seven may need it reading to them. Parents will find it useful to learn how to approach the subject with the child. Siblings and friends may also find it a useful resource to aid their understanding.

**Children's nurse (56-65) (March 2008)**

This book would certainly help children to prepare for their treatment and would help parents explain to siblings. It would also be useful in school when a classmate has been diagnosed.

It is a book to be shared between adults and young children. There is nothing here to alarm a child. The tone is light hearted and the pictures bright and cheerful. The story paints a straightforward and positive picture. Technical language is kept to a minimum and explained within the text. Older children would cope with the font and language but might find the tone a little patronising.

Perhaps there should be some hint that sometimes there are problems. We do not want to scare children but if they read this and then encounter problems, they may find it hard to understand why.

On the whole, a sensible book for parents and children.

**Carer (46-55) (February 2008)**

I am not entirely sure of the target audience for this book. My original view was that it is for very young children, but some parts seem more appropriate for an older child, such as worrying about school work and not worrying about naps. Surely neither would be a worry to a younger child? I'm not convinced that the story really flows. Technical words are explained but the overall feeling is a bit confused.

I don't like some of the images, especially at the beginning, but the bits for the kids to fill in are great. It started out as a good way of getting the message across to smaller kids; it would have worked well if it had stayed that way.

**Cancer survivor (46-55) (January 2008)**

This would be good for a young person to read before a bone marrow transplant. It is colourful, relatively upbeat, and has suitably interesting illustrations for a young child. This is the first book of its kind on this subject I have ever seen. Good for you CCLG!

**Parent of leukaemia patient (56-65) (January 2008)**

# 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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