



# Advice for parents

**Some hesitate to talk about their illness or feelings as an adult. They may have various reasons for this. However, research clearly shows that children who are allowed to be involved in what is happening to you and others close to them feel better than those who are kept at a distance. This is also true in very difficult situations.**

- Tell your child as early as possible about your illness or about what has happened. This is helpful to both your child and you personally. Ask another adult for support if needed.
- Explain that the illness is not contagious and that it is not the child's fault that you are ill.
- Try to stick to your routines and interests to the extent possible. Your child should attend school and be given the opportunity to spend time with friends, have fun and carry on with activities as before.
- Inform a member of staff who is important to the child at preschool or school about your situation. This allows them to pay attention to how the child is coping. It can also be reassuring for the child that someone else knows what is happening. Decide together with your child who should be informed
- Your child needs to know if and when important changes occur.
- Be honest if your child asks how you are feeling. Children notice when adults behave differently. Explain that it is not dangerous if you are sad or worried, and that it is not the child's fault. Allow yourself to be sad, but always try to be hopeful when talking to your child.
- Be honest and try to explain why you react the way you do and why you are the way you are. Explain that it is due to the illness. Your child needs to understand and be assured that it is not their fault if you are tired and do not have the energy to spend time with them.
- It is often helpful to children if they can be involved. For example, if you spend a lot of time at hospital, allow your child to come with you if they wish.