

## New support service will fill ‘missing link’ to help people with gut cancers

By Joanne Naish | May 1, 2026



*Andrew Edgar was diagnosed with Oesophageal Cancer in 2024*

A Hanmer Springs man is celebrating a new support service that plugs a critical gap in cancer treatment – one that would have helped him through his own lonely battle with the disease.

The Gut Cancer Foundation has announced a new partnership with Pancare Foundation to support New Zealanders with upper gastrointestinal cancers.

Andrew Edgar was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer in May 2024. He described feeling alone during treatment and said a specialised support service would have been invaluable.

Edgar began having problems swallowing after many years of gastric reflux. An endoscopy later revealed a lump in his oesophagus, leading to a diagnosis with a 50% survival rate.

He underwent chemotherapy, surgery, and further treatment, but had many unanswered questions during the process.

While he praised his care team, he found a disconnect that a support service could have filled. Being able to talk to someone with specific knowledge of gut cancer was “the missing link”.



*Andrew after his last chemotherapy infusion*

Edgar later returned to work and began sharing his experience to help others.

The Gut Cancer Foundation says 2500 New Zealanders are diagnosed with upper gastrointestinal cancers annually. The new nurse-led telehealth support service will be rolled out in stages, aiming to provide practical help and emotional reassurance for patients and their families.