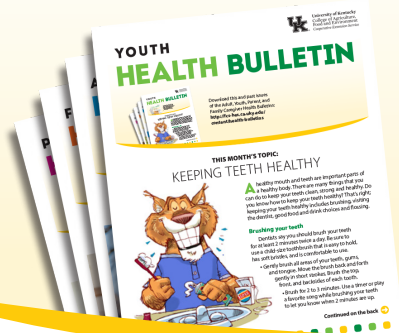


YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN



JUNE 2025

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC WHAT IS CANCER?



You might have heard the word “cancer” before. Maybe you heard it when a person got sick or was going through treatment to get better. You may wonder what cancer is or how a person gets it. You might wonder how cancer is treated to help the person heal.

Cancer is not just one sickness. It is many related diseases that happen when cells in a person’s body get messed up, grow, and divide very quickly. It makes many messed-up cells that grow really fast. These cells stick together and form a tumor, or a big clump, somewhere in the body. Over time, cancer cells can

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move in the body, making tumors in new places. These tumors make it hard for the body to work correctly. Soon, they make a person feel sick.

You cannot catch cancer from someone — it is not contagious. Unlike some other sicknesses, cancer cannot pass from person to person. Germs do not cause cancer.

Doctors and scientists are still learning about why certain people get cancer, and others do not. We do know that cancer is not caused by getting hurt, like getting bumped, bruised, or cut. It is also not a punishment for being bad. However, some things, like smoking or getting lots of sunburns, can make it more likely for cancer to happen later in life. In any case, the sooner cancer is found, and treatment begins, the better the chance a person has of getting better.

Cancer can be treated in different ways. In some cases, taking vitamins and changing things like what the person eats or how they live can be enough to shrink cancer tumors. Others need surgery to cut out the tumor and let their body heal. Sometimes, treatment like chemotherapy or radiation is needed to kill cancer cells that cannot be reached or keep them from coming back.

- **Chemotherapy** is a medicine that targets and kills cancer cells. Sometimes it can be a pill, but often it must be taken through an IV line. An IV line puts liquid medicine into the blood through a needle and tiny tube stuck through the skin.
- **Radiation therapy** uses high-energy waves, like X-rays, to go through the skin. They target and kill cancer cells. As the cancer cells are destroyed, they dissolve, and the tumor shrinks. Both chemotherapy and radiation therapy are very good at killing



cancer cells. Sometimes, though, while destroying cancer cells, they can also hurt healthy parts of the body. That makes the person feel worse. This is called a side effect. Cancer medicine can come with side effects like feeling very tired, having an upset stomach, skin rashes, or hair falling out. However, these problems don't last. When treatment ends, the side effects go away. The person's hair grows back, their skin clears, and they feel much better.

While getting cancer treatment, a person may need extra rest or to stay away from many people to stay away from other germs. After treatment is done, doctors will do tests to see if the cancer is gone. A person whose cancer is gone is called "in remission." Even after a person is in remission, they may still need to go to the doctor from time to time to make sure the cancer does not come back.

If someone you know is told they have cancer, it can seem scary. Talk to your parents or another trusted grown-up about your feelings and questions you have about their situation. You may be able to help the person by encouraging them with a card, taking their family a meal, or offering them prayer or good wishes.

REFERENCE:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/cancer.html>

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