



What is cancer?

Cancer Council



Easy English

Hard words



This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**

- we write what the hard word means.

You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book

- know what this book is about



- find more information.

We will write contact information at the end of this book.

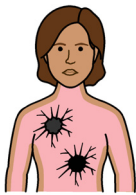
About this book



This book is from Cancer Council.

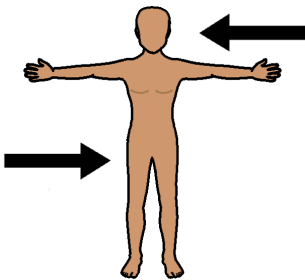


This book is about **cancer**.



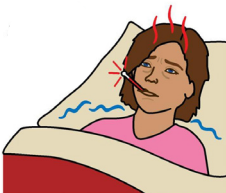
Cancer is a disease that

- grows in the **cells** of your body

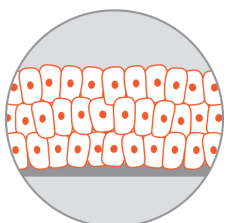


- can grow in any part of your body

- can spread from one part of your body to other parts

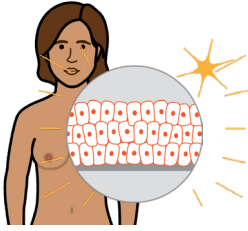


- can make you sick.

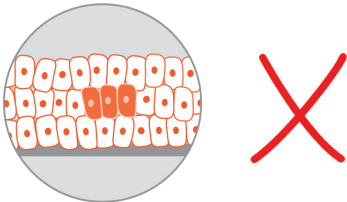


Cells are tiny building blocks that grow and work together to make each different part of your body.

How cancer starts



Your body makes new cells all the time.

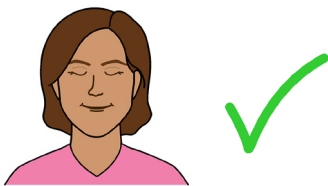


Sometimes when your body makes new cells the new cells are **not** made right.

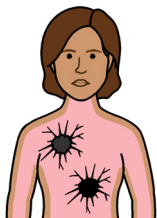


If your body keeps making cells that are **not** right, the cells can stick together and become a **tumour**.

A tumour is a lump of cells that were **not** made right.



Some tumours do **not** harm you.

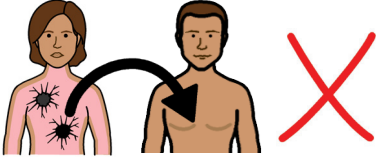


Other tumours can be cancer.

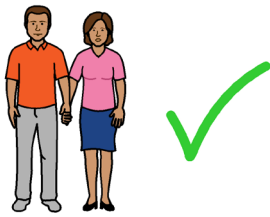
Who can get cancer?



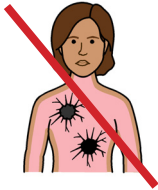
Anyone can get cancer.



You **cannot** catch cancer from someone else.



It is safe to be around someone with cancer.



Cancer is **not** caused by

- injuries

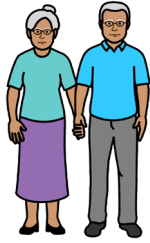


- stress



- being a bad person

- having a bad family.



Half of all cancer happens in people older than 75.



You may be less likely to get cancer if you

- quit smoking



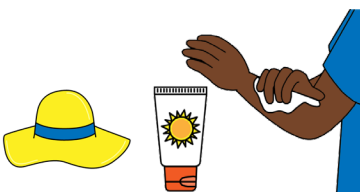
- try **not** to drink much alcohol



- exercise



- eat healthy food



- use sun protection like a hat and sunscreen.

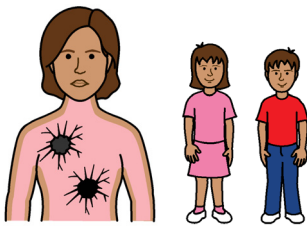


Sometimes you have a higher chance of getting cancer because you

- are overweight



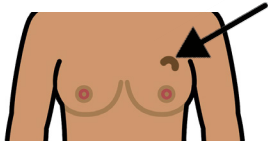
- have been close to some types of chemicals



- have a **family history of cancer**.

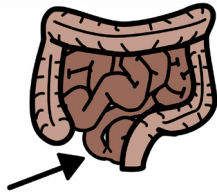
Family history of cancer is when close family members have had cancer.

How is cancer found?



Tests can find some cancers early like

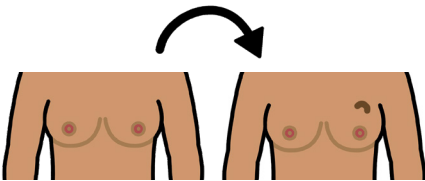
- breast cancer



- bowel cancer

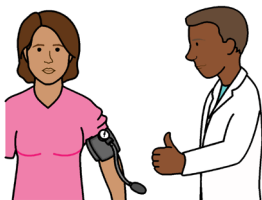


- cervical cancer.



You can look for **symptoms** like changes to your body.

It is good to know what is normal for your body.



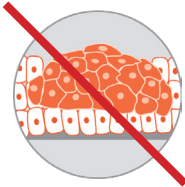
You should go to your doctor as soon as you think something has changed.

Often the changes are **not** cancer but it is best to check with your doctor anyway.

What happens if you have cancer?



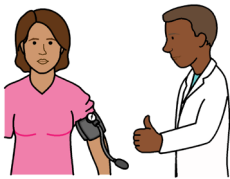
You are likely to need **treatment** if you have cancer.



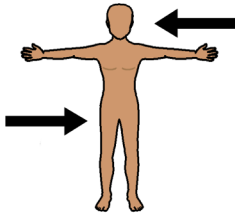
Treatment means ways to try to stop cancer from growing.



The sooner doctors find cancer, the easier it is to treat.

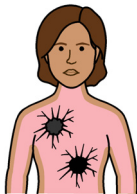


Many people with cancer get better with treatment.

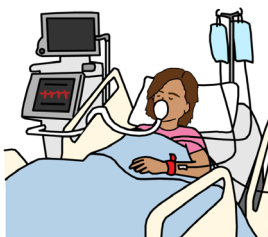


If cancer is **not** treated it can

- spread to other parts of your body

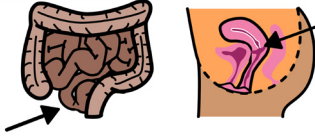


- be hard to stop.



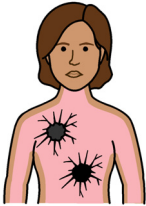
Some cancers are hard to treat which means some people die from cancer.

Types of treatment



There are different types of treatment depending on

- what type of cancer you have



- if the cancer has spread.

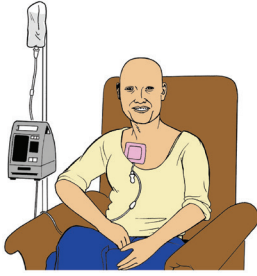


Your doctor will explain the treatment that is best for you.



Sometimes you might need more than 1 type of treatment.

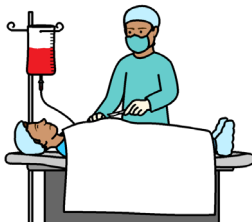
There are 4 common cancer treatments.



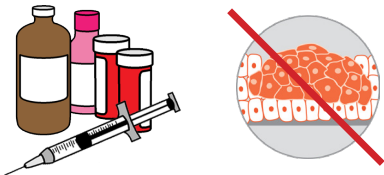
Chemotherapy is medicine that kills cancer cells.



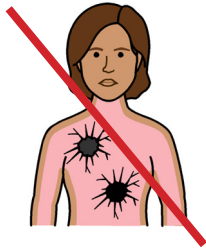
Radiation therapy is radiation beams that kill cancer cells.



Surgery is operations to remove tumours or cancer cells.



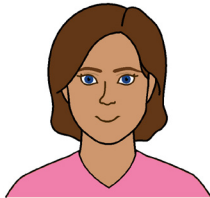
Immunotherapy is medicine that works with your immune system to kill cancer cells.



Depending on the type of cancer you have some treatments can

- get rid of the cancer you have

or

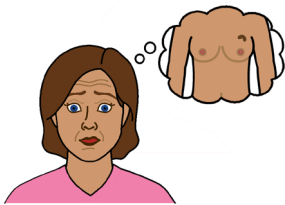


- help you feel better while you have cancer.



Talk to your doctor if

- you want to know more about cancer



- you are worried.

More information



Contact Cancer Council for

- cancer information

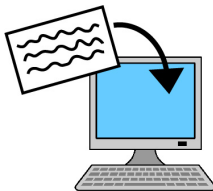
- support.



Call 13 11 20



Website cancervic.org.au



Email askanurse@cancervic.org.au

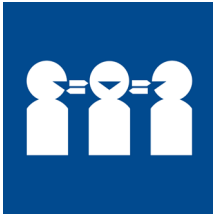
If you do not speak English



You can get cancer information in other languages on our website.



Website cancervic.org.au/languages



Contact Cancer Council through the Translating and Interpreting service or TIS.

Call 13 14 50



Ask the TIS to call 13 11 20.



If you need help to speak or listen use the National Relay Service.



Call 1800 555 660



Website

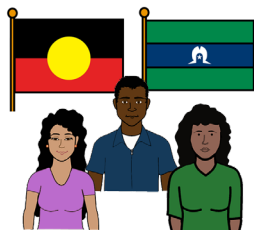
communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs

Ask the relay officer to call 13 11 20.

Acknowledgement of Country



Cancer Council **respects** the **First Peoples of Australia**.



The First Peoples of Australia are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Respect the First Peoples of Australia means we understand the importance of First Peoples

- culture

and

- history.

Acknowledgements

Cancer Council is Australia's peak non-government cancer control organisation. This fact sheet was funded by the Dry July Foundation.

This information is based on the expertise of clinicians who work in the area and consumer experience. We thank the reviewers of this fact sheet.

Note to reader

Always consult your doctor about matters that affect your health. This fact sheet is intended as a general introduction and is not a substitute for professional medical, legal or financial advice. Information about cancer is constantly being updated and revised by the medical and research communities. While all care is taken to ensure accuracy at the time of publication, Cancer Council Australia and its members exclude all liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred by use of or reliance on the information provided in this fact sheet.

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