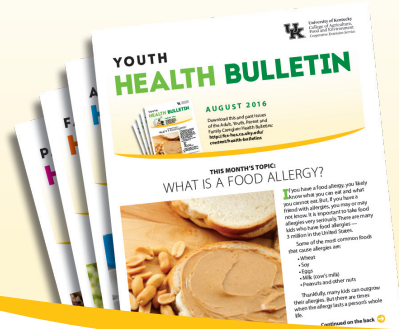




# YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN



MAY 2019

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# WHAT IS CANCER?

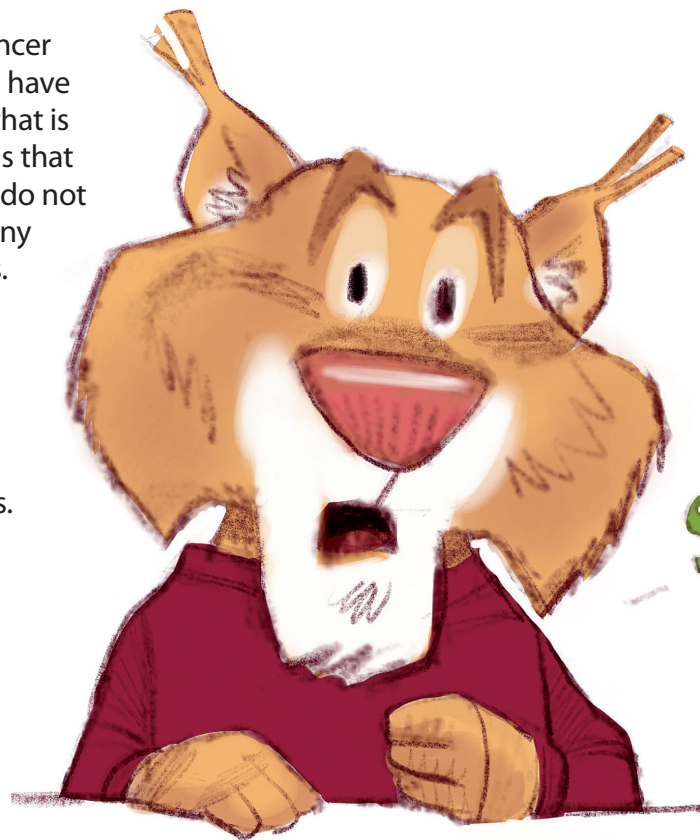
**C**ancer is a scary word. And cancer can be scary, especially if you have known someone who has it. But what is cancer? Cancer happens when cells that are not normal grow very fast and do not know when to stop. Cells are the tiny units that make up all living things.

Cancer cells usually group or clump together to form tumors. A tumor becomes a lump of cancer cells that can kill the normal cells around the tumor and hurt the body's healthy tissues. That makes someone very sick.

### Important things to know about cancer

- You cannot catch cancer like a cold or the flu.

Continued on the back →



# Cancer happens when cells (tiny units that make up all living things) grow very fast and do not know when to stop.

## → Continued from page 1

Doctors do not know why some people get cancer and others do not.

- You can still talk, play with, and hug someone who has cancer.
- If someone you love has cancer, you did nothing wrong to cause the cancer.

When someone is going to the doctor to get better from cancer you might hear words like:

- **Surgery.** Having surgery means doctors will do an operation and fix something inside the body. During surgery, the doctor will try to take out as many cancer cells as possible. The doctor might have to remove some healthy cells or tissue to make sure that all the cancer is gone.
- **Chemotherapy.** Chemotherapy, or chemo, is a big word meaning that doctors will use medicine to help people who have cancer. Sometimes the medicines are a pill, but most of the time they are given through a special intravenous line, also called an IV. The medicine flows from a bag right into a vein, which puts the medicine into the blood, where it can travel throughout the body and attack cancer cells. Sometimes, the strong chemo medicine affects hair cells, which might cause people to lose their hair.
- **Radiation.** Radiation therapy uses high-energy waves, such as X-rays, to damage and destroy cancer cells. It can cause tumors to shrink and even go away completely. Radiation therapy is one of the most common treatments for cancer.



Doctors treat cancer with surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation — or sometimes a combination of these treatments. The choice of treatment depends on what type of cancer someone has.

## Important things to know about cancer treatment

- Chemo often decreases the amount of fighter cells (white cells) which can weaken the immune system. The immune system helps you fight colds and other common illnesses.
- If someone has cancer, they might not be able to go into public spaces when they are in treatment, because they are more likely to pick up germs.
- If you are around someone who has cancer, wash your hands with soap and water to keep from spreading germs.
- Tell your parents or grandparents if you are feeling sick, because someone with cancer might need to stay away until you get better.

### SOURCES

- <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/cancer.html>
- <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/cancer.html>
- <https://mnangel.org/wp-content/uploads/Children-Guidebook.pdf>

## YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN

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