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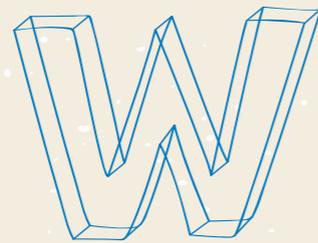
A helpful resource

for

teens by teens



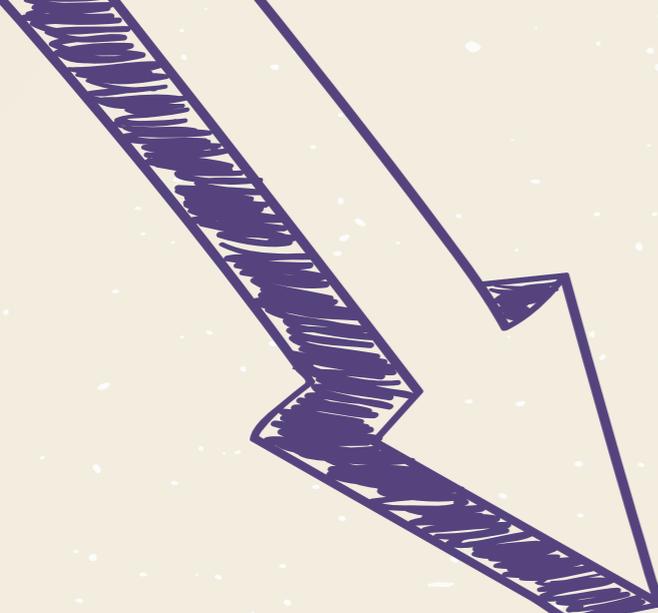
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD Anderson Cancer Center
Children's Cancer Hospital®



When it comes to cancer, sometimes it's hard to know what to say. That's why teens who've experienced cancer share their thoughts about how to talk to friends with cancer.

Throughout the book you'll find simple explanations for what cancer is, how it's treated and what cancer might look like for your friend.

It's a book designed by teens for teens just like you to make talking about cancer a little bit easier.



What does it mean to have cancer?

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What are the most common types of *cancer*?

Leukemia

Someone who has leukemia has cancer in his or her blood.

Their body is creating lots of blasts, or baby white blood cells, that make it difficult for the white blood cells — the cells that fight infection (immune system) — to grow and do their job.

Lymphoma

Someone who has lymphoma has cancer in their lymphatic system, which is a network in the body that helps fight against infections.

Your friend may have cancer in their lymph nodes, thymus, spleen, tonsils, adenoids and bone marrow, as well as the tissues that connect them.



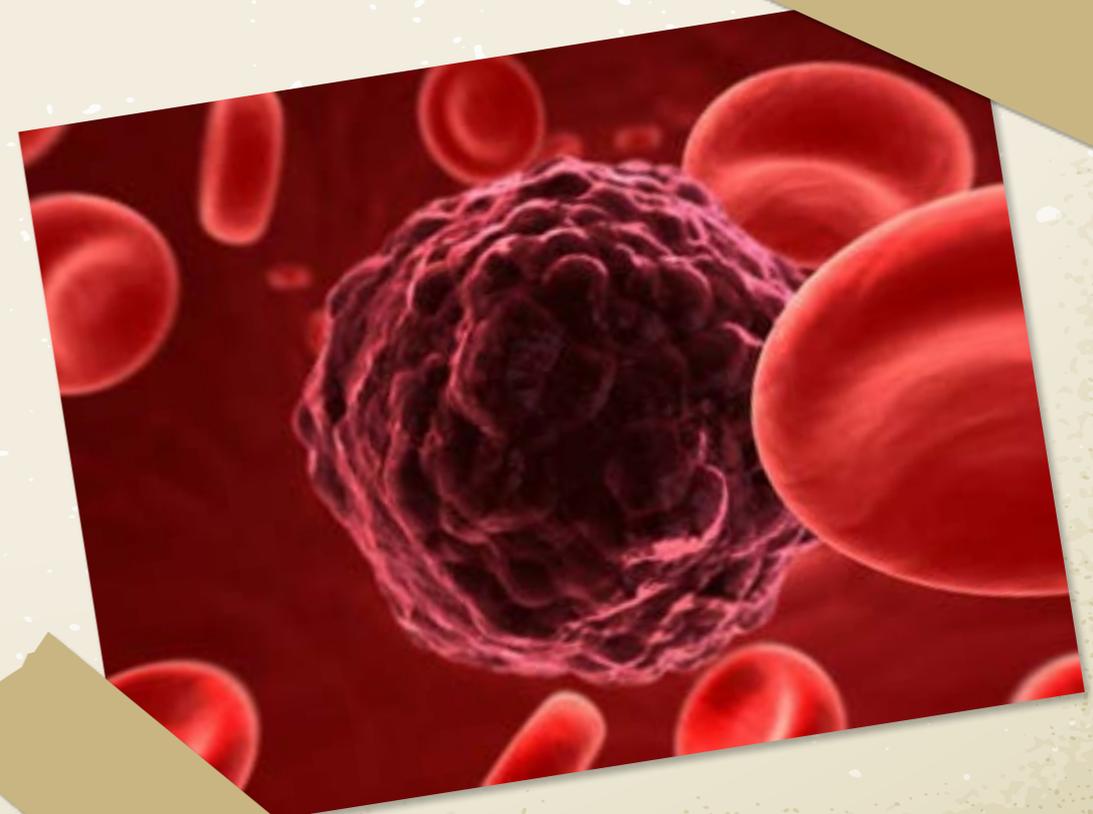
What are the most common types of cancer? (continued)

Solid Tumors

Someone can have a tumor anywhere in his or her body. Your friend might have one in their brain, eyes, or organs, like the liver, lungs, kidneys or skin. Some people also have tumors in their arms and legs. A tumor is a group or clumping of cells. Tumors can grow and divide which makes the tumor bigger and bigger, making it hard for the body to do its job.

Some common names of solid tumors are:

- Medulloblastoma and other Brain Tumors
- Neuroblastoma
- Wilms Tumor
- Sarcomas (Ewing's Sarcoma, Rhabdomyosarcoma, Osteosarcoma, Desmoplastic small round cell tumor)
- Melanoma
- Endocrine Tumors (Thyroid, Pituitary)



How do we **FIGHT** CANCER ?

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a type of medicine and it's job is to destroy or damage cells that are rapidly growing, like cancer cells. It's very powerful. You might hear your friend call it "chemo."

Chemo can be given to a person through:

- Medicine tubes, called an I.V., which gives them medicine through a tube into veins in their arm, or
- Pills, like other normal medicines.

Radiation

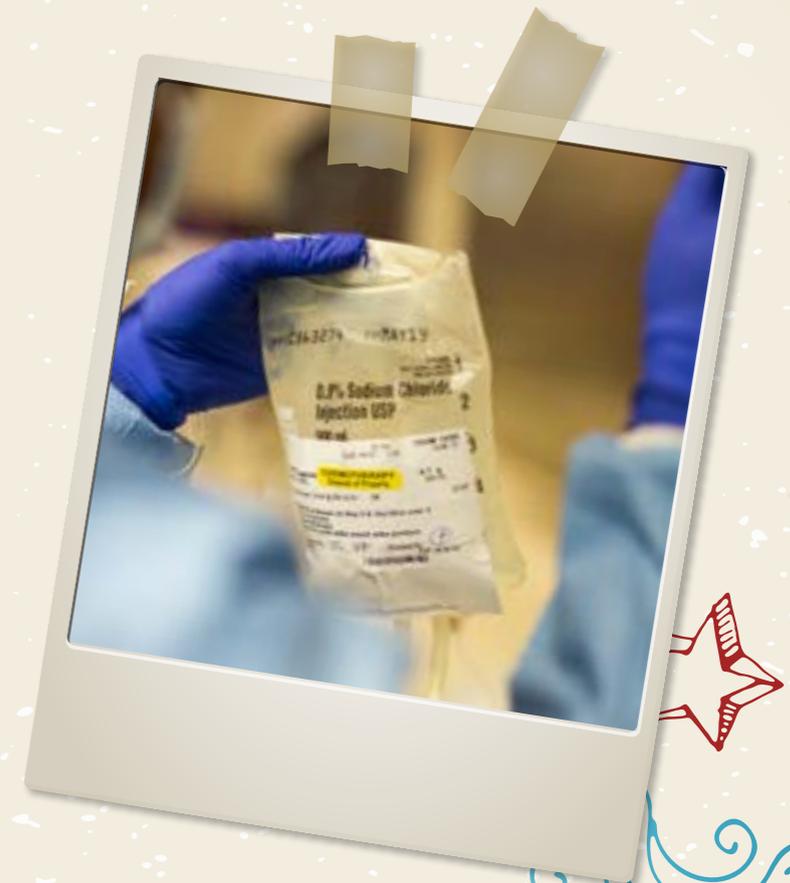
Another way to treat cancer is with ra-diation. Radiation is the use of invisible, high-energy waves to damage or destroy cancer cells.

Doctors use a large machine to send invisible rays that your friend can't see or feel. Your friend might have marks on his or her body to help target where he or she receives their treatment.

Surgery

Sometimes someone with cancer has surgery to remove the cancer cells from his or her body.

When someone has surgery, the doctors give them anesthesia, so that the tumor can be taken out of the body.





How does cancer affect my friends?

Sometimes the treatments used to destroy cancer cells can destroy or damage healthy cells as well. Your friend might feel sick to their stomach, tired, experience pain or discomfort, or have headaches or mouth sores.

Common healthy cells that often get attacked are the cells that make hair. While receiving treatment, your friend might lose some or all of their hair.

Your friend may also experience changes in their body due to the medicine. Common changes include losing or gaining weight, and having changes with their skin.

Treatment affects people in different ways. You may notice these changes or you might not.





How can I be helpful to my friend who has cancer?

Talking about cancer can be difficult. Not everyone likes to share what is going on with his or her bodies, and that's okay. Some people do wish to let their friends know about the changes their body is going through. Finding the right things to say or do can be challenging. Here are some tips from teens just like you:

Show support:

- Let your friend know you're there for them
- Call, email and text to let them know you care
- Remind them you are thinking about them

Ask how you can be helpful:

- Offer to pick up their homework at school for them
- Bring movies or games over to their house
- Invite them out to do something they enjoy



How can I be helpful to my friend who has cancer? (continued)

Treat your friends the same as you did before they got sick:

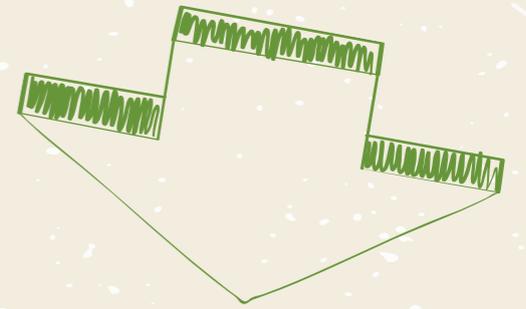
- Talk about things you normally enjoy discussing
- Engage in activities you and your friend enjoy together
- Share fun memories and stories

BE respectful of what they want, and don't want, to share with you and other people:

- Listen to your friend
- Talk to your friend about how much they want to share with others.
- Understand what they want others to know, and what they don't

LEARN about your friend's treatments & cancer:

- Research about your friend's diagnosis
- The more info you gain, the better you can help your friend.



How can I help myself?

Finding out a friend has cancer can be confusing and overwhelming. There are many other resources that offer support for you and your friend as well. Here are a few people who can help you through this journey:

School Counselor or Nurse:

- An educator and counselor whose job is to offer support and advice on school and personal subjects. Ask your teacher if your school has one available.

Parents:

- Your parents or family are a great resource to turn to. They often know you best, and can be people you can trust with any questions or concerns.

Remember, it's important to find someone you can trust to talk to about any issues that you might be wondering or worrying about.

Web Resources

- GroopLoop: www.grouploop.org
- CancerCare: www.cancercare.org
- Imerman Angels: www.imermanangels.org
- I'm Too Young For This!: www.imtooyoungforthis.org



Glossary

Medulloblastoma – a type of tumor found in the low, rear portion of the brain [GO BACK](#)

Brain Tumors – cancer in the brain and/or spinal cord [GO BACK](#)

Neuroblastoma – cancer that starts in the early nerve cells, most commonly in the abdomen or pelvis. Neuroblastomas can also be in the spine, chest or neck. [GO BACK](#)

Wilms Tumor – cancer of the kidney [GO BACK](#)

Sarcomas – cancer of the connective tissue, bone, cartilage, fat or muscle [GO BACK](#)

Ewing's Sarcoma – cancer in the bone or the soft tissue around the bone

Rhabdomyosarcoma – cancer of the muscle cells, usually a solid tumor

Osteosarcoma – cancer of the bone, most commonly in long bones such as one's arms or legs

Desmoplastic small round cell tumor – a type of sarcoma that most commonly occurs in the abdomen

Melanoma – cancer of the skin [GO BACK](#)

Endocrine Tumors [GO BACK](#)

Thyroid – a tumor located in a butterfly shaped gland in the front part of the lower neck

Pituitary – a tumor located in a small gland located at the base of the brain

Surgery – also referred to as an operation, is a procedure that doctors perform to help something inside someone's body. [GO BACK](#)

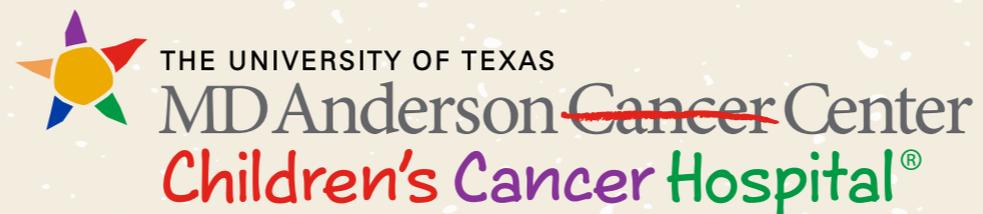
Anesthesia – the use of medicine to prevent the feeling of pain during surgery or other procedures. [GO BACK](#)

Treatments – include chemotherapy, radiation therapy and surgery. [GO BACK](#)

Tumor – the uncontrolled growth of cells that group together and form a mass. [GO BACK](#)



Produced by imPACT, the patient advisory council for teens at
The MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital



designed by: Gini Reed
Hand lettering by: Erin McCormick