

KID FRIENDLY WAYS TO EXPLAIN

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TO EXPLAIN CANCER

You can use these ideas or create your own.

WEEDS IN THE GARDEN

In the garden there are plants called weeds. Weeds are unwanted plants because they grow too quickly and take over the beautiful flower bed. They crowd out the healthy plants and flowers taking up all the space.

Cancer cells are like weeds in the body. They are unwanted because they grow too quickly and take over parts of the body, crowding out the healthy cells so the body doesn't work properly.

If not treated, weeds spread. Some weeds spread faster than others. This is same as cancer.

Doctors need to get rid of or cancer cells, just like gardeners need to get rid of the weeds.



You can use the weed story to explain treatment too. For example: Gardeners can dig weeds up to get rid of them (surgery) or spray them with weed killer (chemotherapy).

Your children might like to draw a garden and what the weeds/cancer might look like.



EXPLAINING SECONDARY CANCER

All plants, including weeds, have roots that keep them firmly in the ground. Sometimes the roots grow underground, through the soil, and pop up as a new weed in another place in the flower bed. The gardener can't see this happening because the new growth is hidden underground. Sometimes this can happen with cancer. The cancer grows undetected in another place hidden from the doctors.



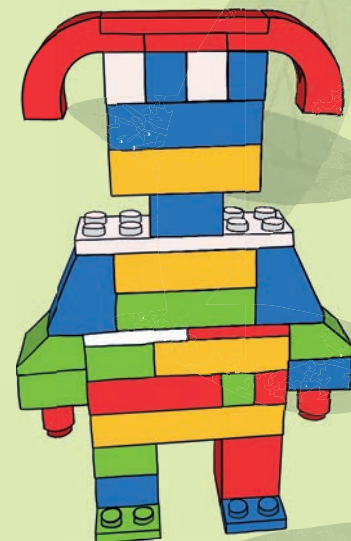
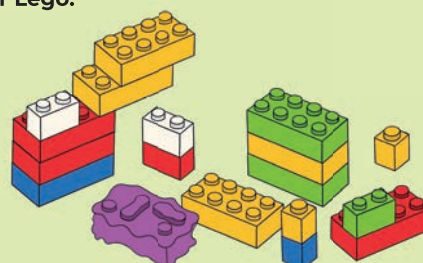
LEGO BODY

Our bodies are made up of tiny cells that fit together perfectly like Lego. Cancer cells are like bits of odd shaped Lego that do not fit together. If you were building a wall of Lego and you try to fit in an odd-shaped one, the wall would not work properly.

This is like our bodies. Cancer cells get in the way of healthy cell that are trying to do their jobs. This means the body doesn't work properly.

Doctors need to find the odd shaped Lego pieces and remove them so the body can work properly again.

Your children might like to try and build a cancer Lego.

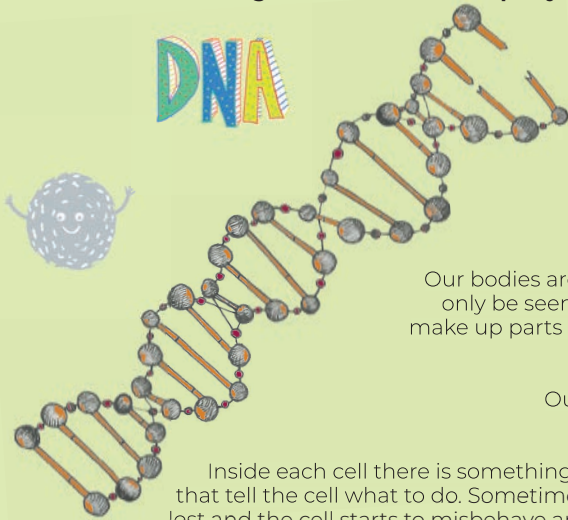


PARTY IN THE BODY

Our bodies are made up of billion of tiny cells. They all work together and behave very well so our bodies work properly. Sometimes some of the cells start to misbehave, and refuse to listen to the other cells and the body. They like to have wild parties.

These party cells are called cancer cells. They break all the rules and stop the body working properly. Doctors need to break up the party, calm everything down, and get rid of the party cancer cells.

Your children might like to draw a cell party in the body with disco lights and party food.



DNA

BIOLOGY LESSON

Cancer is a type of illness where some of the body's cells grow too quickly.

Our bodies are made up of billions of cells. They are tiny and can only be seen with a microscope. Cells are grouped together to make up parts of our bodies, such as skin, brain and muscle. Each body part is made up of different types of cells.

Our bodies can grow and repair themselves because cells can make copies of themselves.

Inside each cell there is something called DNA. DNA is basically a load of instructions that tell the cell what to do. Sometimes these instructions can become damaged or get lost and the cell starts to misbehave and not listen to the body. They can make too many copies of themselves and don't stop when the body tells them to. These cells are cancer cells.

Cancer cells carry on making copies of themselves until they form a lump called a tumour. Cancer cells do not like sticking together with their neighbouring cells so sometimes can float off around the body to find another place to settle and start to make more copies of themselves.

When this happens, we say the cancer has SPREAD.

There are over 200 different types of cancer because there are over 200 different types of cells in our body, and cancer happens when a cell starts to misbehave.

Different types of cancers behave differently. For example, how fast they grow, how they affect the body, whether they spread and how they behave to special medicines.

Your children might like to make some cancer cells and healthily cells out of playdough.



YOUR STORY

My cancer is called

The part of the body it is found in

The doctors are going to treat my cancer using

The treatment might cause some side effects (unwanted problems) which will go away once the treatment has stopped. The side effects might be

Doctors think my treatment will last for

so hopefully will end by this month

