

What is Cancer?

DANIEL

Smoking causes cancer, right? So, how come some kids who never, ever smoked get cancer?

LORRIN

Boy, that is a great question, Daniel.

Unfortunately, doctors and scientists don't know exactly why people get cancer, even though they do know that breathing in cigarette smoke is one thing that can cause it.

DANIEL

OK...back the train up a bit. What exactly is cancer anyway?

LORRIN

Remember how we talked about the human body being made up of these little, itty, bitty things called "cells"?

LORRIN

Almost everything in our bodies is made up of cells. As long as they all act like they're supposed to, everything is fine. The problem is that, sometimes, cells go kind of haywire. They get to doing things they shouldn't.

DANIEL

Like what?

LORRIN

Sometimes cells get growing more than they should. Sometimes they start to split or divide in ways they shouldn't. Sometimes they attack and hurt other, healthy cells.

LORRIN

When the out-of-control cells bunch together, they form something called a "tumor" which means a growth.

LORRIN

When they attack certain cells in your blood, they're called leukemias.

LORRIN

There are many different types of cancer, but of the 12 types that are usually found in kids, leukemia, brain and nerve cancers are the most common.

What is Cancer?

DANIEL

So, in kids, how common is cancer overall? Is it something you catch from someone else who has it?

LORRIN

Not that common and, no, you can't catch it from someone else and no one else can catch it from you. Still, it is a very serious disease. But, with the right attitude and help from your doctors and nurses, you can fight cancer.

DANIEL

How do you fight it?

LORRIN

The good news is that doctors have gotten better and better at treating cancer, especially in children. Most kids will be cured or have long remissions of their cancer.

DANIEL

Mission? What mission? Who's on a mission?

LORRIN

No, silly. "Remission."

LORRIN

That's when the cancer goes away enough that you feel better again.

DANIEL

That's my kind of mission! So, how do doctors help get rid of a kid's cancer or bring on a remission?

LORRIN

Most importantly, having a good attitude has been shown to be one of the best ways to beat cancer. It's very important to fight back at cancer!

DANIEL

Never give in, never give up!

LORRIN

You said it! There's never a better time to fight back...and to laugh.

What is Cancer?

DANIEL

Laugh? But this is cancer! This is serious!

LORRIN

Absolutely! And laughter is always one of the very best medicines, especially with cancer! So, even though it might be scary and there's lots to deal with, this is one of the best times to find reasons to laugh and giggle and to just find fun whenever you can!

DANIEL

I like that. There's always a reason to smile somewhere.

LORRIN

I agree.