

Glossary and **index**

The glossary in this chapter will help you define and explain common cancer-related words. For each word, there is a simple definition suitable for young children, as well as a plain English definition suitable for older children, adolescents and adults. An index for this book can be found after the glossary.

Glossary

Word	For younger children	For older children, adolescents and adults
benign	Not cancer.	Cells that are not malignant (cancerous).
biopsy	When the doctor looks at cells in the body to see if they're healthy or not.	A test to diagnose cancer. The doctor takes small bits of tissue from the body and looks at them under a microscope to see if the cells have changed.
blood count	A test that checks how healthy the blood is.	A test that counts the number of red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets in the blood.
bone marrow	The soft, spongy kind of jelly inside bones where different blood cells are made.	The soft, spongy material inside bones, which produces red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets.
cancer	Cancer is a disease that happens when some cells in the body stop working properly. These cells can grow into a lump and can spread to other parts of the body.	Cancer is the name for over 200 diseases in which abnormal cells grow and rapidly divide. This uncontrolled growth may result in abnormal blood cells or grow into a lump called a tumour. The abnormal cells may spread to other parts of the body.
cells	The body is made up of billions of tiny things called cells, and each has a job to make your body work and stay healthy.	Cells are the basic building blocks of the body. Our bodies constantly make new cells to help us grow, to replace worn-out cells, or to heal damaged cells after an injury.
central line	When a person has a tube in their body so they don't have to have needles.	A small tube that is used to get direct access to a vein so blood or chemotherapy can be given.
chemotherapy	Special medicine that kills the bad cancer cells.	A cancer treatment that uses drugs to kill cancer cells or slow their growth.
CT scan	A test that makes pictures so doctors can see what's happening inside the body.	A procedure that uses x-rays to create detailed, cross-sectional pictures of the body that show if cancer is present.
diagnosis	When the doctor works out what is making someone sick.	Working out what kind of disease someone has.
donor	A person who gives someone else some of their blood or another part of their body.	The person who gives blood, tissue or an organ to another person for transplantation.
haematologist	A doctor who treats people whose blood makes them unwell.	A specialist doctor who diagnoses and treats diseases of the bone marrow, blood and lymphatic system.
immune system	The part of the body that helps someone stay well by getting rid of germs inside the body. It fights illness if somebody does get sick.	A network of cells and organs that defends the body against attacks by foreign invaders, such as bacteria and viruses, which can make people sick.
immunocompromised	When someone gets sick very easily.	Weakening of the immune system, often caused by disease or treatment.
intravenous (IV)	Putting a needle into a vein (where blood is in the body).	Injected into a vein.

Word	For younger children	For older children, adolescents and adults
lymph nodes	Lymph nodes are like filters that remove germs that could harm you. Sometimes, the germs can make some of the lymph nodes swell.	Small, bean-shaped structures that form part of the lymphatic system and help fight infection.
maintenance treatment	When someone is given medicine for a long time to help keep the cancer away.	Treatment given for months or years as part of the treatment plan.
malignant	Another word for cancer.	Cancerous. Cells that are malignant can spread to other parts of the body.
medical oncologist	A special doctor who uses strong medicine to treat people.	A specialist doctor who treats cancer with drug therapies such as chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy (systemic treatment).
metastasis (advanced cancer)	When the cells that aren't working properly have travelled to another part of the body.	When cancer has spread from one part of the body to another.
MRI scan	A way to take pictures of the inside of a person's body to see if they are sick.	A medical scan that uses magnetism and radio waves to take detailed, cross-sectional pictures of the body.
nausea	Feeling sick in the tummy.	Feeling as if you're going to vomit.
palliative care	Sometimes the doctors and nurses can't stop the cancer from growing, and they will give someone medicine to make them feel better and get rid of any pain.	Treatment that focuses on relieving symptoms and improving people's quality of life without trying to cure the cancer.
prognosis	What the doctors think might happen after treatment, and someone's chances of getting better.	The expected outcome of a person's disease. This helps doctors decide on treatment options.
radiation oncologist	A special doctor who uses x-rays that go into the body to kill cancer cells and make the cancer smaller.	A specialist doctor who treats cancer by prescribing and coordinating a course of radiation therapy.
radiation therapy	Invisible beams called x-rays that go into the body to kill cancer cells and make the cancer smaller.	The use of targeted radiation to kill or damage cancer cells so they cannot grow, multiply or spread. The radiation is usually in the form of x-ray beams. This is different to when you get x-rayed to see inside you (e.g. for a broken leg).
recurrence/relapse	When cancer comes back and the person feels sick again.	When cancer comes back after a period of improvement.
remission	When cancer goes away after treatment.	When cancer cells and symptoms reduce or disappear because of treatment. Remission may not mean that the cancer is cured, but that it is now under control.

Word	For younger children	For older children, adolescents and adults
side effects	Problems that can make someone feel sick or tired or lose their hair after treatment. Someone might gain or lose weight, or experience other changes. Most side effects go away after some time.	The unwanted effects of treatment, such as nausea, fatigue and hair loss. This is because treatment damages some healthy cells as well as the cancer cells. The healthy cells usually recover after a while (e.g. hair grows back again).
stage	When the doctor tells the person how sick they are.	The extent of the cancer and whether it has spread from an original site to other parts of the body.
surgery	When someone has an operation and a doctor called a surgeon cuts out the cancer.	An operation to remove the cancer. Sometimes large parts of the body will be removed with the cancer, such as a breast or the bladder.
symptoms	What people feel (e.g. sore, itchy) or see (e.g. redness, a lump) when something's not right in the body.	Changes in the body caused by an illness, such as pain, tiredness, stomach-ache or rash. These help the doctor work out what is wrong.
tumour	A lump in the body that shouldn't be there.	A new or abnormal growth of tissue on or in the body. Tumours can be benign (not cancer) or malignant (cancer).
ultrasound	A test that allows doctors to look inside the body so they can work out if anything is wrong.	A scan that uses soundwaves to create a picture of part of the body. It helps show where and how big a tumour is.

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