

Let's talk about cancer

Suitable from approx.
age 10+

This activity can be done with individuals or small groups and requires a facilitator

Aim

To introduce the different vocabulary around cancer immunology. This is a simple and quick introductory activity intended as a conversation starter. The aim of the game is to match the word to its definition.

Materials

- Clipboards or space at a table
- Printed activity sheets
- Pens / pencils
- Answer sheet for facilitators

Instructions

- 1** Ask participants to match the word to the definition. Use the printed activity sheet to draw a line between the word and definition.
- 2** Reveal the answers and talk through the further information.
- 3** Ask participants which ones surprised them (if any) and why.
- 4** Let the conversation be guided by the participant, there may be certain words or topics they are more interested to find out about, or that they have personal experience of and want to discuss further. Use the 'further information' on the answer sheet if needed.
- 5** Re-cap any new vocab with them, making sure they have understood the definition correctly.
- 6** A small 'prize' such as a sticker could be used as a reward!

Let's talk about cancer - activity sheet

Draw a line between the word and its meaning

Cancer

Chemotherapy

Immunotherapy

Cure

Hormone therapy

Leukaemia

Benign

Tumour

Carcinomas

Sarcomas

Lymphomas

Radiation therapy

Oncology

Surgery

Biopsy

A new type of cancer treatment that uses the power of the body's immune system to prevent, control, and get rid of cancer.

Cancer that starts in the blood and bone marrow.

A substance or treatment that heals a disease or condition.

A drug treatment using powerful chemicals to kill fast-growing cells in the body.

The uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body. Normally our cells die when they are damaged or old, but sometimes this process breaks down, and damaged cells grow and multiply when they shouldn't.

Cancer that starts in the bone, cartilage, fat, muscle or other connective tissues.

Some cancers use hormones to grow or develop (e.g. oestrogens for breast cancer and androgens for prostate cancer). This cancer treatment blocks or reduces the amount of specific hormones in the body to stop or slow down the growth of cancer.

A tiny piece of tissue used to diagnose many types of cancer.

The study of cancer.

Cancer that starts in epithelial cells. These cells normally form a layer that line the surfaces of organs e.g. our skin.

A cancer treatment that uses high doses of radiation to kill cancer cells and shrink tumours.

A condition, tumour, or growth that is not harmful. It does not spread to other parts of the body.

An operation or procedure to take out a tumour and sometimes nearby tissue.

An abnormal mass of tissue that forms when cells grow and divide more than they should or do not die when they should. Tumours can be cancerous or not cancerous (benign).

Cancer that starts in the immune system.

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Answer

Optional further information

Cancer

The uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body. Normally our cells die when they are damaged or old, but sometimes this process breaks down, and damaged cells grow and multiply when they shouldn't.

Cancer can start almost anywhere in the human body. Normally, human cells grow and multiply to form new cells as the body needs them. When cells grow old or become damaged, they die, and new cells take their place. But when someone has cancer their body does not control old cells properly, and instead of dying they continue to grow, forming abnormal cells. In some but not all cancers these extra cells may form a mass of tissue, called a tumour

Chemotherapy

A drug treatment using powerful chemicals to kill fast-growing cells in the body.

Chemotherapy is one of the most popular types of cancer treatment. It can be effective because cancer cells grow and multiply much more quickly than most cells in the body. Chemotherapy can be pills, injection, infusion, or on the skin. Chemotherapy is sometimes given with the aim of curing the patient, and in other cases given to prolong life or reduce symptoms. As well as killing cancer cells, chemotherapy can damage some healthy cells which can cause a range of unpleasant side effects.

Immunotherapy

A new type of cancer treatment that uses the power of the body's immune system to prevent, control, and get rid of cancer.

All types of immunotherapies use materials from living organisms to fight cancer. The format of the treatment might be a vaccine, cell transfer, inserting a modified virus to target a tumour and many other approaches.

- Some treatments teach the immune system to recognise and attack cancer cells.
- Some treatments boost immune cells.
- Some treatments provide the body with extra tools to enhance the immune system.

Immunotherapy is still at an early stage in terms of development but has a lot of potential. Because immunotherapy targets only the cancer cells, the side effects tend to be much less severe than other types of treatment.

Biopsy

A tiny piece of tissue used to diagnose many types of cancer.

Typically, in a biopsy the surgeon will remove some tissue for analysis under a microscope.

Cure

A substance or treatment that heals a disease or condition.

There are no cures for any cancer, but many people are treated for cancer and can live out the rest of their life. Others are treated for cancer, but unfortunately die from it, although treatment may give them more time.

Doctors cannot be 100% sure that cancer will never come back, so when treatment appears to be successful, doctors will say the cancer is "in remission," rather than "cured." Remission is a period when the cancer is responding to treatment or is under control.

Hormone therapy

Some cancers use hormones to grow or develop (e.g. oestrogens for breast cancer and androgens for prostate cancer). This cancer treatment blocks or reduces the amount of specific hormones in the body to stop or slow down the growth of cancer

Hormone therapy can come in the form of a pill, injection or surgery.

Patients receive either hormones or drugs which inhibit the production or activity of hormones.

Because hormone therapy blocks your body's ability to produce hormones or interferes with how hormones behave, it can cause unwanted side effects.

Leukaemia

Cancer that starts in the blood and bone marrow.

The most common types of leukaemia involve the bone marrow producing an excessive amount of abnormal white blood cells.

Diagnosis is typically made by blood tests or bone marrow biopsy.

It is the most common type of cancer in children, however, the majority of leukaemia are diagnosed in adults.

Benign

A condition, tumour, or growth that is not harmful. It does not spread to other parts of the body.

Benign tumours are not considered cancer. They stay in their location and do not invade other parts of the body. Benign tumours are not usually problematic.

Tumour

An abnormal mass of tissue that forms when cells grow and divide more than they should or do not die when they should. Tumours can be cancerous or not cancerous (benign).

The tumour microenvironment contains the normal cells, molecules and blood vessels that surround and feed a tumour. A tumour can change its microenvironment, and the microenvironment can affect how a tumour grows and spreads.

Carcinomas

Cancer that starts in epithelial cells. These cells normally form a layer that line the surfaces of organs e.g. our skin.

Carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer and there are two different types depending on which layer of the skin the cancer is found in. These are usually painless and grow slowly.

Sarcomas

Cancer that starts in the bone, cartilage, fat, muscle or other connective tissues.

Soft tissue sarcomas are a group of rare cancers affecting the tissues that connect, support and surround other body structures and organs. There are many different types of sarcoma.

A diagnosis will usually be made by a hospital specialist based on symptoms, scans and a biopsy.

Lymphomas

Cancer that starts in the immune system.

Lymphoma is a cancer of the white blood cells called lymphocytes. When lymphocytes grow out of control and become cancerous they can collect in almost any part of the body but the most common place is in the lymph nodes.

Diagnosis is usually made by a hospital doctor based on a biopsy.

Radiation therapy

A cancer treatment that uses high doses of radiation to kill cancer cells and shrink tumours.

Radiation therapy kills cancer cells or slows their growth by damaging their DNA, causing the cancer cells to stop dividing or die.

There are two main types of radiation therapy, external beam and internal.

Radiation not only kills or slows the growth of cancer cells, but it can also affect nearby healthy cells. Damage to healthy cells can cause side effects.

Oncology

The study of cancer.

An oncologist is a doctor that specialises in cancer and cancer treatments.

Surgery

An operation or procedure to take out a tumour and sometimes nearby tissue.

Surgery is the oldest form of cancer treatment and is still widely used. Surgery works best for solid tumours and tumours that are contained in one area. It is a local treatment, meaning that it treats only the part of your body with the cancer. It is not used for leukaemia or for cancers that have spread.

Surgery can be used to either remove the entire tumour, or just part of it to decrease its size or relieve symptoms.

Sometimes surgery is used to prevent cancer.
