About 9,910 children under the age of 15 will be diagnosed with cancer in the US in 2023. After accidents, cancer is the second-leading cause of death in children ages 1 to 14. About 1,040 children under the age of 15 are expected to die from cancer in 2023.*

Because of major treatment advances in recent decades, 85% of children with cancer survive 5 years or more. The cancer mortality rate in children has declined by more than half since the mid-1970s. Still, survival rates can vary a great deal depending on the type of cancer and other factors, and progress has lagged behind for several cancers, such as diffuse midline gliomas.

Types of Cancer That Develop in Children
The types of cancers that occur most often in children are different from those seen most often in adults. The most common are:

- Leukemia
- Brain and spinal cord tumors
- Neuroblastoma
- Wilms tumor
- Lymphoma (including both Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin)
- Rhabdomyosarcoma
- Retinoblastoma
- Bone cancer (including osteosarcoma and Ewing sarcoma)

In rare cases, children may develop other cancers that are much more common in adults.

Risk Factors for Childhood Cancer
- There are no known ways to prevent childhood cancers.
- Lifestyle and environmental factors have not been shown to cause most childhood cancers, although radiation exposure may raise the risk of a few.
- In rare cases, a child might inherit gene changes that can make them more likely to get a certain cancer.

Signs and Symptoms of Cancer In Children
Cancer in children is not common, and many are found early. But some can be hard to recognize since early symptoms can be similar to those caused by injuries or common illnesses.

It’s important to schedule regular checkups so a child can be checked if any unusual signs or symptoms don’t go away. This might include:

- An unusual lump or swelling
- Unexplained paleness or loss of energy
- Easy bruising or bleeding
- An ongoing pain in one area of the body
- Limping
- A fever or illness that doesn’t go away
- Frequent headaches, often with vomiting
- Sudden eye or vision changes
- Sudden unexplained weight loss

Treating Children With Cancer

Treatment for childhood cancer is based on the type and extent of the cancer. The main types of treatment used are surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy (chemo). Some types of childhood cancers might be treated with high-dose chemo followed by a stem cell transplant. And newer types of treatment, such as targeted therapy drugs and immunotherapy, are becoming increasingly important in treating some types of childhood cancer.

Treatment for childhood cancers is most often given by a team of experts. This team may include pediatric oncologists and nurses, social workers, psychologists, and others trained to assist young patients and their families. Outcomes are generally most successful when treatment is managed by specialists at a children’s cancer center.

It is important to note that some childhood cancer survivors develop late or long-term effects of their cancer or its treatment, including additional cancers.

Visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/cancer/cancer-in-children or call us at 1-800-227-2345 to learn more. We’re here when you need us.