

September

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Cancer is the second leading cause of death, only to accidents, in children aged 1-14 years in the nation. In 2017, an estimated 10,270 children were diagnosed with cancer and 1,190 died of the disease in the nation.

In South Carolina, childhood cancer rates are lower than the national average. While male children aged 0-14 are more likely to be diagnosed than female children of the same age in the state, females have a higher incidence rate than males among young adults aged 15-19. By race, White children are more likely to be diagnosed with childhood cancer than African-American children, regardless of age.

TYPES OF CHILDHOOD CANCER

- **Leukemia** is cancer of the body's blood-forming tissues, including the bone marrow and the lymphatic system. It is the most common cancer among children in both the U.S. and South Carolina, accounting for almost one-third of all cancers in the nation and 25 percent of all cancers in South Carolina among children.
- **Central nervous system (CNS) and Associated Neoplasms**, which affect the brain and spinal cord, are the second most common type of childhood cancer, accounting for more than 20 percent of childhood cancers nationally and 18 percent among South Carolina children. CNS tumors most often occur in children under 10 years of age.
- **Lymphoma** is a cancer of the lymphatic system, which is part of the body's germ-fighting network. The lymphatic system includes the lymph nodes, spleen, thymus gland and bone marrow. Lymphoma is the third most common form of childhood cancer, accounting for 10 percent of cancers among children under the age of 15.



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CAUSES OF CHILDHOOD CANCER

While many causes of childhood cancer remain unknown, there are a few known factors that can increase the risk of developing childhood cancers including genetic factors and prenatal/postnatal exposures.

Genetic factors include chromosomal disorders (ex: Down Syndrome) and clinical syndromes (primary disease process findings) which can place some children at a higher risk of cancer. Inherited genetic mutations, such as retinoblastoma and neuroblastoma, can also increase the risk of cancer in children.

SURVIVAL RATES

Because of major advances in treatment, more than 80 percent of all children diagnosed with cancer will survive five years or more. This is a significant increase in survival rates from the mid-1970s when survival was under 60 percent.

These advances have greatly improved the future outlook and survival rate for children with cancer. However, survivors of childhood cancer receiving chemotherapy and/or radiation are at increased risk of subsequent cancers.

MORE INFORMATION

National Cancer Institute | www.cancer.gov

SC Department of Health and Environmental Control | www.scdhec.gov

American Cancer Society | www.cancer.org

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