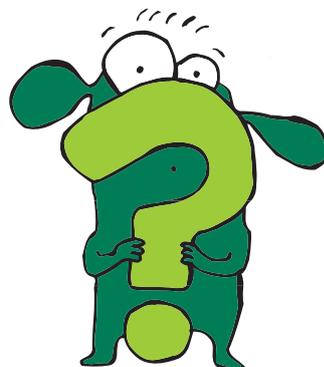


# WHAT IS CANCER? THE FACTS



## Links to the National Curriculum:

PSHE/PSD/Health and Wellbeing, Science, English.

Links can also be made to the *Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework 2008*.

## Resources

- Photocopies of resource sheets **What is cancer?** and **More about cancer**.
- Scissors and glue sticks.

## Objectives

- To learn some basic facts about cancer.
- To consider the emotions often felt by people who are affected by cancer.

## Introduction

Explain that cancer is an illness that lots of people don't properly understand and often feel worried about. Ask pupils what they know, or think they know, about cancer. Write their ideas on the board.

Use the resource sheet **What is cancer?** to help you explain the illness. Ask pupils to underline any words or sentences they don't understand. Discuss these as a class and clarify any remaining misconceptions.

## Main activity

Hand out the **More about cancer** resource sheet and introduce Mr Davies. Talk about the emotions he and his friends and family feel when he learns he has cancer.

Working in groups or pairs, ask pupils to cut out the pictures, speech bubbles and cancer fact boxes. Their task is to match the speech bubbles to the appropriate people. Then add the cancer fact they think will most help each of the four characters to feel less worried.

The correct combinations are as follows:  
Mr Davies – Why me? What have I done wrong?  
– Cancer fact **D**  
Rachel – I'm scared Dad's going to die  
– Cancer fact **C**  
Mike – People with cancer always lose their hair  
– Cancer fact **B**  
Ben – Can I catch grandad's cancer?  
– Cancer fact **A**

## Follow up work

Pupils could use their picture/word sequences to tell a story or write a short play. Working in pairs or small groups, encourage them to express their emotions and responses sensitively.

Ask pupils to talk about and list ways they can help people with cancer, perhaps through fundraising or holding a special awareness-raising event.

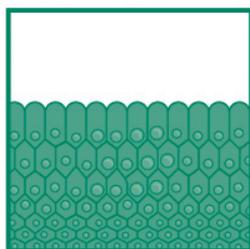
Follow this lesson with the Key stage 2 **How can I stay fit and healthy?** lesson plan.

For further support to help you teach about cancer, and to order your free *Cancertalk* teaching pack, visit [macmillan.org.uk/schools](http://macmillan.org.uk/schools)

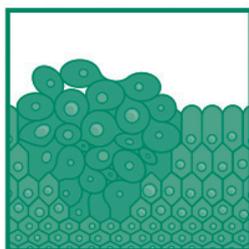
# WHAT IS CANCER?

## What is cancer?

Our bodies are made up of millions of building blocks called cells. You cannot see them except with a microscope. Cancer is an illness that affects these cells and stops our bodies working properly. Cells affected by cancer are called cancer cells. Sometimes these cancer cells form a lump which is often called a tumour.



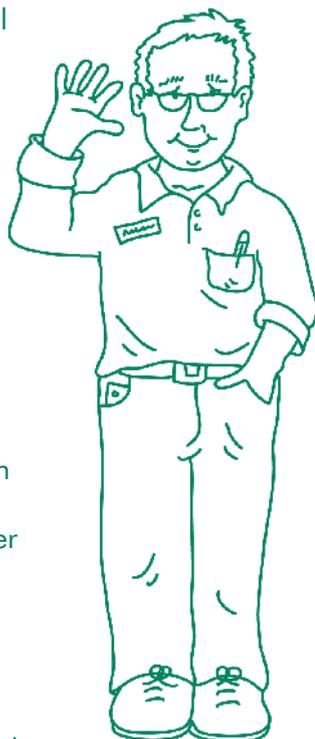
Normal cells



Cells forming a tumour

## Meet Mr Davies

Mr Davies is the school caretaker. He has worked at the school for over 10 years and is very popular. Recently, Mr Davies hasn't been able to come into school because he is being treated for cancer. His cancer cannot spread to the people around him (people can't catch cancer from someone else), but it could spread to another part of his body and stop that part working properly. To stop the cancer spreading, Mr Davies needs to go to hospital for treatment.



## Mr Davies can be treated for cancer

The doctors could treat Mr Davies's cancer in three main ways:

**Surgery** – The cancer cells may have formed a lump called a tumour. This is cut out during an operation.

**Radiotherapy** – The cancer cells are destroyed by high energy rays. This doesn't hurt and is like having an X-ray taken.

**Chemotherapy** – Very strong drugs are used to kill the cancer cells.

Radiotherapy and chemotherapy have some side effects. People who have these treatments can feel sick and tired, and their hair can fall out. These side effects will not last long – and hair nearly always grows back. The earlier someone gets treatment for their cancer, the better.

## Did you know?

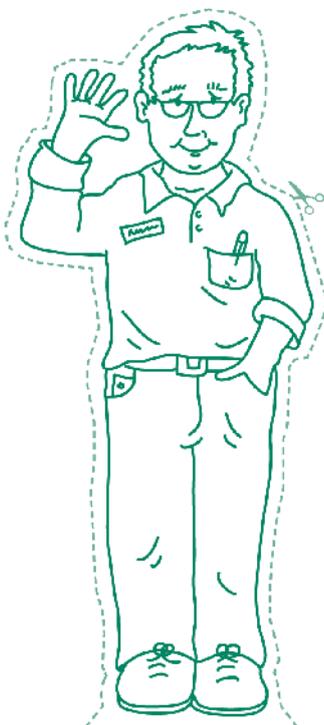
- Anyone can get cancer.
- Lots of people get better from cancer and live a normal life.
- It is very rare for children to get cancer.
- Cancer is not a punishment for doing something wrong. No one knows exactly why some people get cancer and other people don't.
- Sometimes the treatments cannot make the cancer go away and sadly some people die from the illness.

# MORE ABOUT CANCER?

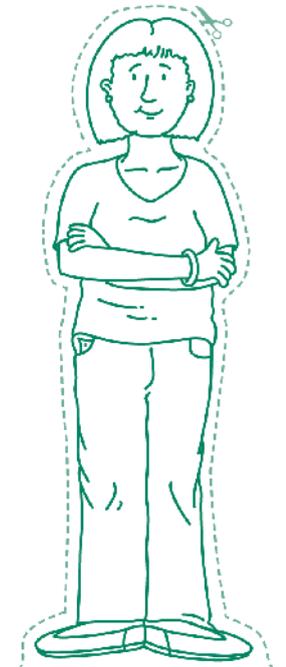
**Mr Davies lives with his daughter, Rachel, and his two grandchildren, Ben and Natasha. Ben is nine and Natasha is four, and they both go to the school where Mr Davies works.**

You can help Mr Davies, his family and friends to understand more about cancer.

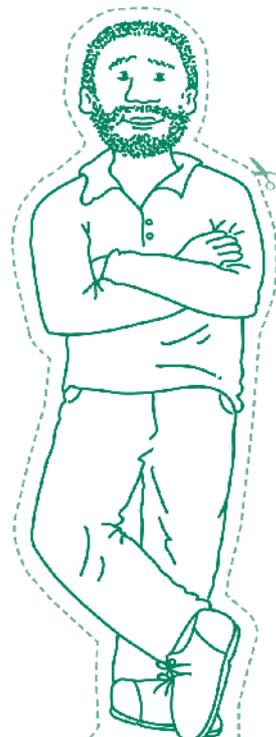
Cut out all the pictures and speech bubbles. Match the speech bubbles to the people you think are saying the words. Now give each of them the fact about cancer you think would help them to feel less worried.



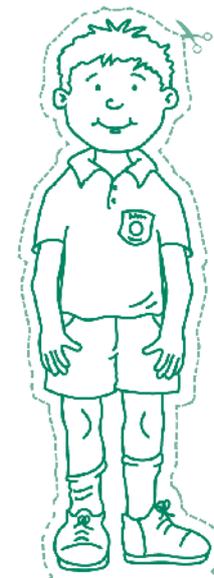
**Mr Davies** is a school caretaker. He has cancer.



**Rachel** is Mr Davies's daughter and Ben's mum.



**Mike** is a good friend of Mr Davies.



**Ben** is Mr Davies's nine-year-old grandson.

You can help Mr Davies, his family and friends to understand more about cancer. Cut out all the pictures and speech bubbles. Match the speech bubbles to the people you think are saying the words. Now give each of them the fact about cancer you think would help them to feel less worried.



People with cancer always lose their hair.



Can I catch grandad's cancer?



Why me?  
What have I done wrong?



I'm scared Dad's going to die.



### Cancer fact A

Mr Davies's cancer cannot spread to the people around him.



### Cancer fact B

If Mr Davies has chemotherapy, he could lose his hair. It always grows back though, and sometimes even thicker than before.



### Cancer fact C

Many people overcome cancer and continue to live normal lives.



### Cancer fact D

Anyone can get cancer. It is not a punishment for doing something wrong. The person who gets it is not to blame.