

SUMMARY

In this lesson, students talk about the difference between sicknesses you can and cannot catch as well as some ways to reduce their risk for both.

**NATIONAL ACADEMIC STANDARDS
(DEVELOPED BY THE MID-CONTINENT REGIONAL
EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY – MCREL)****HEALTH:**

- > knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health
- > knows essential concepts about the prevention and control of disease

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- > demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning

**STUDENT LEARNING
OBJECTIVES**

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- > Discuss reasons why people get sick and some ways to reduce their risks.

RESOURCES**ON THE SITE:**

- > Teacher Sheet, "Questions and Answers about Cancer"
- > Video, "Introduction Video with Lance Armstrong"
- > Teacher Sheet, "What Can You Catch"
- > Teacher Sheet, "What Contributes to Cancer"
- > Extension Activity, "Connor Is Sick"

PREPARATION

1. Read the teacher sheet, "**Questions and Answers about Cancer**". Use the content as background for the lessons and for answering questions from students.
2. Download the "**Introduction Video with Lance Armstrong**" and set up on a computer or TV for viewing by the students. (If you have trouble downloading the video, make sure you have the latest version of QuickTime.)
3. Make a copy of the teacher sheet, "**What Contributes to Getting Cancer**", so that you can show the illustrations to the class.
4. Print out a copy of the illustrations from the teacher sheet, "**What Can You Catch**" and post them on the board. Draw a large circle under each illustration.

THE LESSON

1. Show students the "**Introduction Video with Lance Armstrong**" and let students know that you will be talking about cancer for the next few days. If they do not know what cancer is, let them know that it is a type of illness that you cannot catch from other people.
2. Ask a few students to share experiences of times when they have ever gotten a cut or a scrape. Ask volunteers how it happened.
3. Ask a few students to share experiences of times when they have ever gotten a cold, chicken pox, or other contagious illness. Ask volunteers how it happened.
4. Point out to students that we usually know how we get injured, but it's usually much more difficult to know how we get sick. Mention that some sicknesses (such as colds, chicken

pox or other illnesses that students in your class have experienced) are contagious: we can catch them from others. We can catch a cold from touching another person or by touching things they have been near, such as when someone sneezes into the air.

5. Draw two big circles on the board, next to each other. Above one circle post the illustration of the catcher's mitt from the "**What Can You Catch**" teacher sheet; above the other circle post the illustration of the catcher's mitt with a slash through it. Give students the following instructions:
 - > "Inside this first circle we're going to write some sicknesses that are contagious, sicknesses you can 'catch.' That's why this catcher's mitt is here; you can 'catch' what's inside. Everyone knows that you can catch a cold, so we're going to write 'cold' in here. Does anyone know any other illnesses you can catch?"
6. After students have made suggestions (e.g., flu, chickenpox), ask students to look at the illnesses in the first circle and say some of the things they do to try not to catch an illness from others, such as washing their hands, not sharing drinks, covering their mouth when they cough. Emphasize that by doing these things they are reducing their risk of getting sick: they are doing what they can to try not to get sick.
7. Ask students if they know of any sickness or disease that people can't catch (for example: asthma or diabetes.) Write those diseases in the second circle. Now ask, "What about cancer? Can you 'catch' cancer?" Agree that people can't catch cancer, and write "cancer" in the second circle.
8. Ask students if they know someone who has had any of the illnesses in the second circle.
9. Tell students that the diseases in the second circle (such as asthma, diabetes and cancer) all have one thing that is the same. They are all types of sicknesses, that unlike colds, you cannot catch from another person. While all 3 are important to discuss, let students know that cancer will be what they will talk about today and tomorrow.
10. Tell students that cancer is a disease that people cannot catch from other people. Emphasize the following information:
 - > Mostly older people get cancer
 - > Kissing or hugging someone you love who has cancer cannot give you cancer
 - > Being near someone who is sneezing or coughing cannot give you cancer
 - > Bug bites can not give you cancer
 - > There are many different kinds of cancer
 - > There are many types of treatments, or medicine available, to help people with cancer to get better
 - > Many people can live happy lives a long time with and after cancer
11. Tell students that while you cannot catch cancer, there are things you can do to reduce your risk of getting cancer later in life. While we do not know what causes all cancers, we do know some things we can do to help reduce the risk of getting some kinds of cancer. Ask students if they know of anything they can do to reduce their risk such as:
 - > Wearing sunscreen
 - > Staying out of the sun
 - > Eating healthy foods
 - > Exercising and maintaining a healthy weight
 - > Never smoking cigarettes and staying away from smoke

You may want to use the pictures included in the Teacher Sheet, "**What Contributes to Getting Cancer**" to help illustrate these examples.

12. Remind students that most people who get cancer are much older, but that it is always a good idea to make healthy choices. Emphasize the point that it is never someone's fault that they get cancer, but just like washing our hands to reduce our risk of getting a cold, we can try to reduce our risk of getting cancer.

Check for Understanding

13. Tell students that you'd like to show them some pictures and ask them some questions about cancer. One by one, show students the teacher sheet, "**What Contributes to Getting Cancer?**" and ask them the following questions:

- > If you hug someone you love that has cancer, can you get cancer? NO
- > If you get a bug bite, can you get cancer? NO
- > If someone sneezes on you that has cancer, can you get cancer? NO
- > If you stay out of the sun, cover up, or wear sunscreen, can you reduce your risk of getting cancer? YES
- > If you never smoke and stay away from smoke, can you reduce your risk of getting cancer? YES
- > If you eat healthy foods and exercise can you reduce your risk of getting cancer? YES

Re-emphasize that cancer isn't something you can catch, is something that mostly happens to older people, and that people with cancer can live a long time once they get cancer.

14. Tell students that they can help those with cancer or other sicknesses by offering their love and support. Say that in the next lesson, they'll be talking more about how to do that.

Extension Activities: If you would like to emphasize this lesson with students, you can implement the extension activity, "**Connor is Sick**". You can also review the "**Get Involved**" booklet to learn more about how your students and your school can become advocates for people affected by cancer by participating in **LIVESTRONG** events in your community, raising funds for cancer research, accessing information about people living with cancer, or increasing cancer awareness.