Paediatric cancer is rare, but is fatal if not diagnosed and treated.

Most paediatric cancers are curable if found early and referred to Princess Marina Hospital immediately.

There are many types of paediatric cancers.

Recognition of cancer symptoms is life-saving!

LYMPHOMA NEEDS TO BE TREATED RIGHT AWAY

If you think your child might have lymphoma, your child’s doctor should consider the following based upon findings:

- Physical exam and identification of abnormal findings
- Blood tests such as full blood count, erythrocyte sedimentation rate, uric acid, lactate dehydrogenase (LDH), kidney and liver function tests
- X-ray of chest
- Ultrasound of abdomen
- Computed tomography (CT) scan
- Biopsy of lymph node
- Bone marrow evaluation and biopsy
- Lumbar puncture (spinal tap)

If cancer is suspected, your child’s doctor should consult the paediatric oncology team at Princess Marina Hospital.

Paediatric Haematologist/Oncologist at Princess Marina Hospital

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The body has a defense system against infections called the immune system. The lymphoid system is part of the immune system. It is made up of:
- lymph nodes
- bone marrow
- lymph vessels
- spleen
- thymus

These organs produce, store and carry white blood cells which help filter out germs to fight infection and disease. People usually cannot feel lymph nodes unless they become swollen while fighting infection. If the swelling does not go down on its own or after a treatment with antibiotics, then cancer should be considered.

What is a cancer of the immune system?
Lymphoma is a cancer of the immune system and lymphoid tissues. Types of lymphomas include Hodgkin lymphoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Because lymph tissue is found throughout the body, lymphoma can begin in almost any part of the body. Cancer can spread to the liver and many other organs and tissues. Lymphoma can occur in both adults and children. Treatment for children is different than treatment for adults.

Symptoms:
The sick cells (cancer cells) do not work properly to protect the body and they crowd out healthy cells of the immune system. Lymph nodes are usually larger than those that occur with common infections and are usually painless, firm, rubbery, and immobile (do not move) in the surrounding tissue. You might see:
- Non-painful swollen lymph nodes in more than one location which are greater than the size of a grape or 2.5 cm in the neck, underarm, or groin
- Sometimes the lymph nodes involved are in the intestines so there may be swelling of the abdomen, abdominal pain, constipation or blood in stool
- Difficulty breathing, such as wheezing or shortness of breath, or high-pitched breathing sounds may occur due to enlarged or swollen lymph glands in the chest
- Generalized pain
- Swollen nodes of any size which do not go away after 3-4 weeks
- Fevers that last more than 5 days without a known cause
- Night sweats that make the linens wet
- Feeling weak or tired for greater than 2 weeks without a known cause
- Refusal to walk or pain in the bones or joints (especially pain at night)
- Bleeding and bruising easily (bleeding gums, purplish patches in the skin, or tiny red spots under the skin)
- Swelling or discomfort in the abdomen (from a swollen spleen or liver)
- Weight loss for no known reason