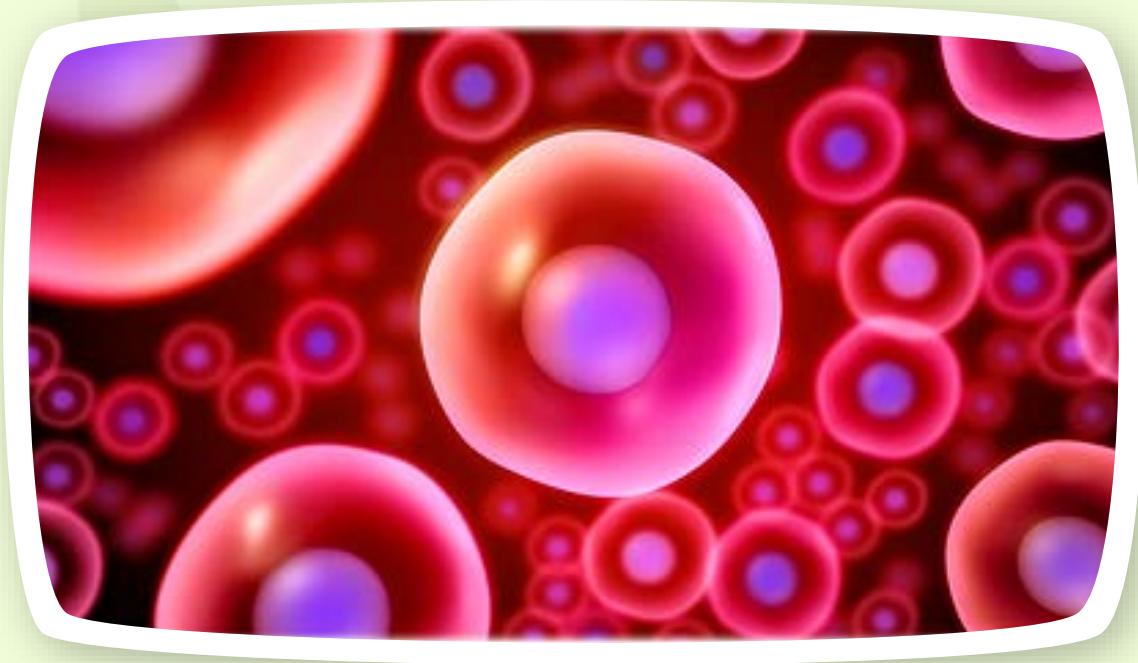


What is cancer?

A little answer to a big question...



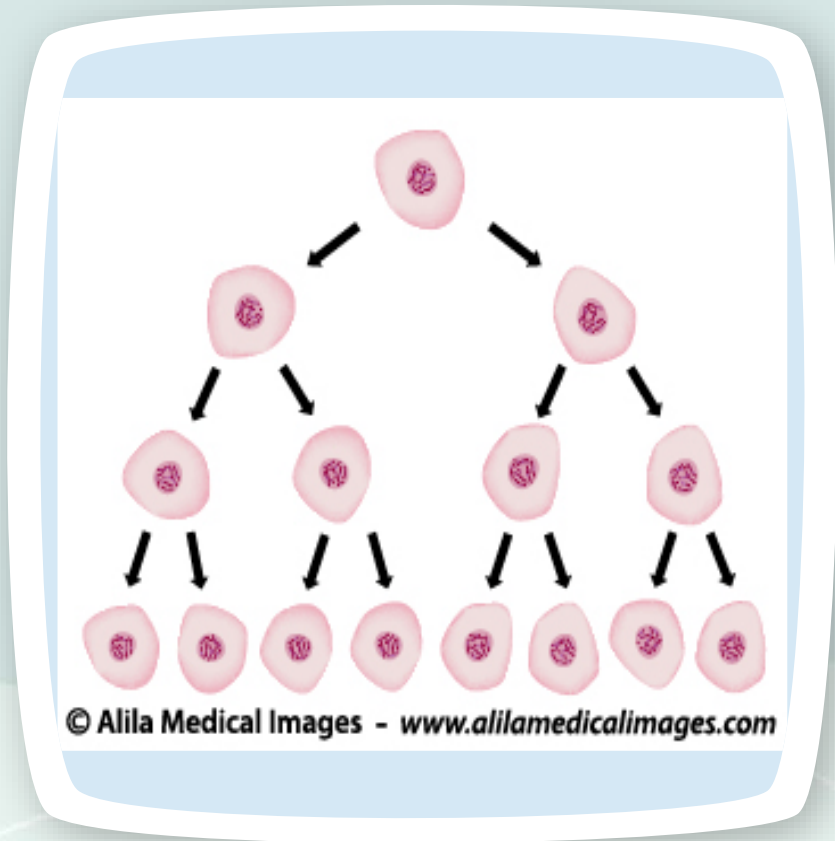
Your body is made up of building blocks called **cells**.



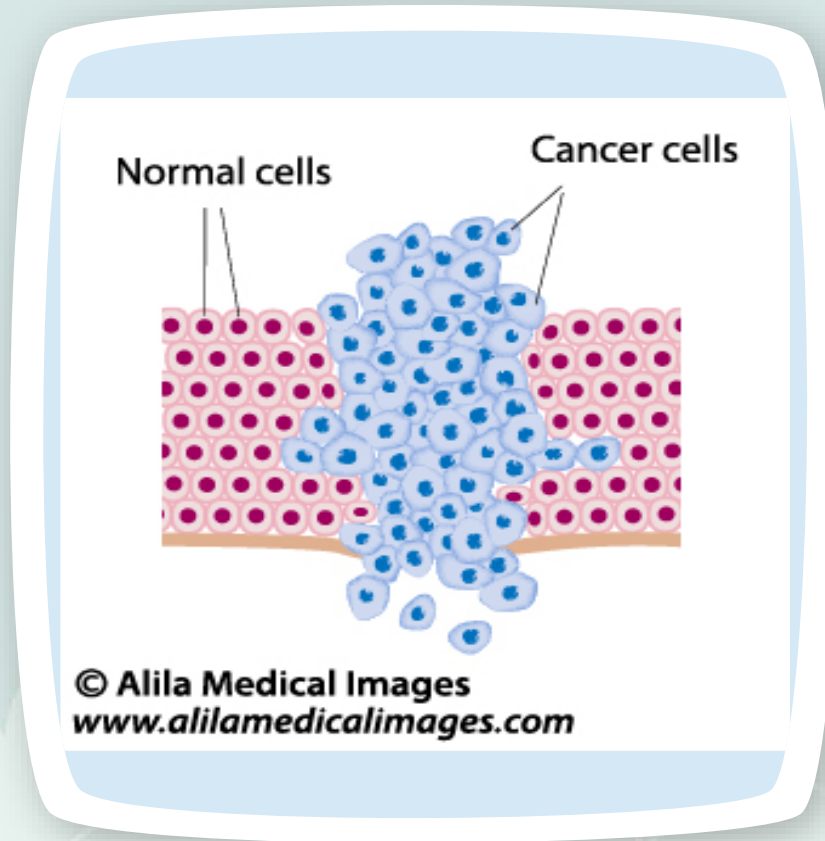
Cells are so tiny you need special equipment to see them. There are many types of cells, and each cell has a job.

The center of the cell is where the cell's instructions are. That way it knows which job to do.



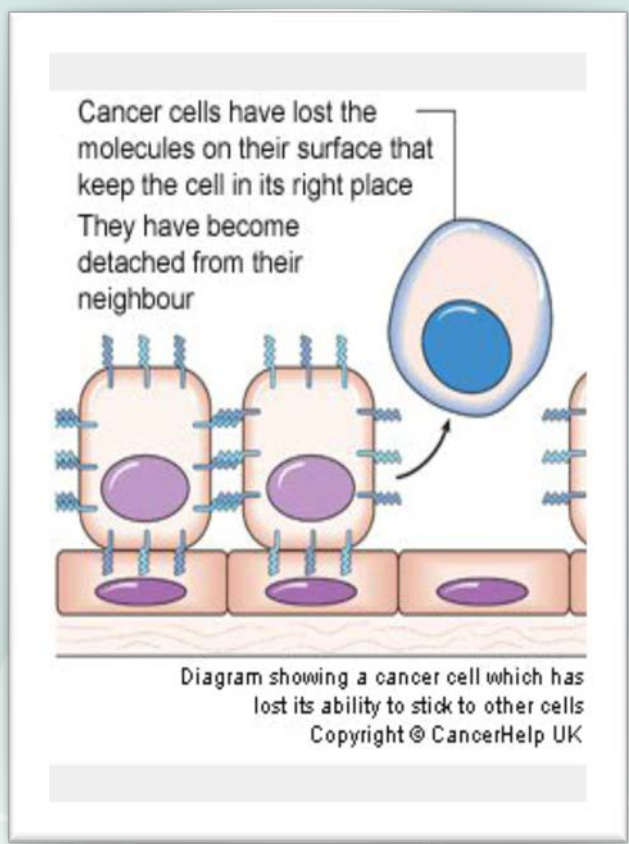
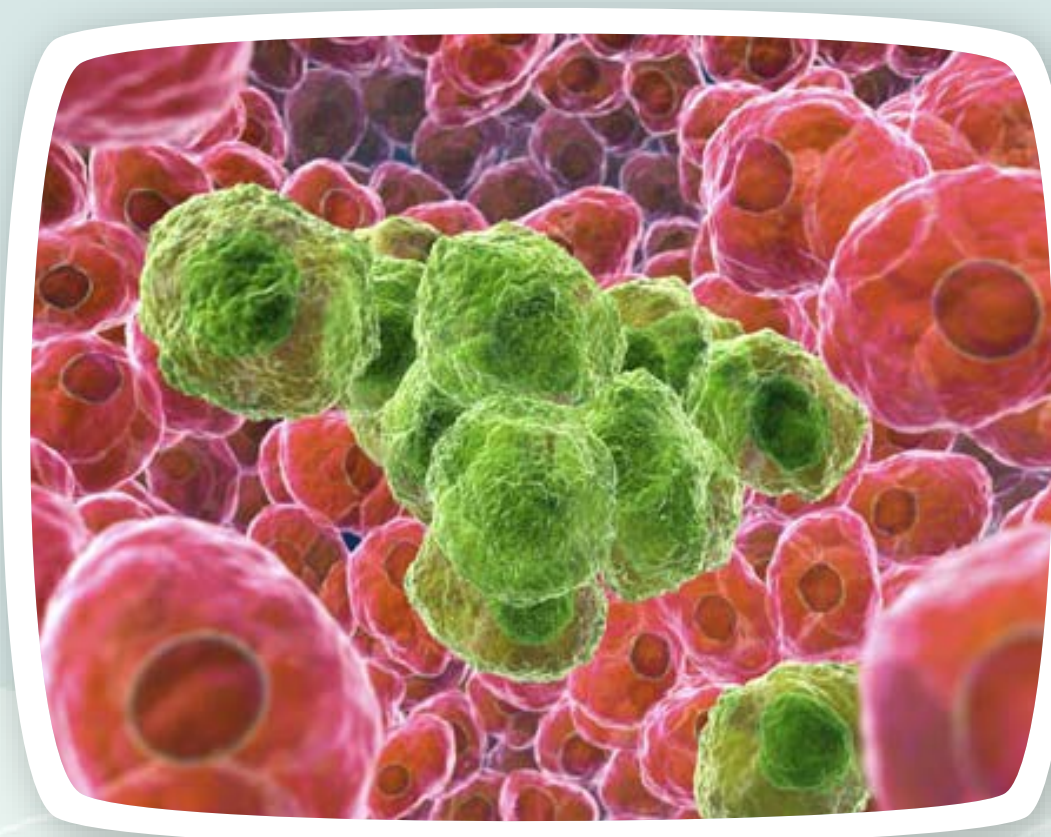


Part of a cell's job is to make copies of itself, so that the new copies can keep working when the old ones can't.



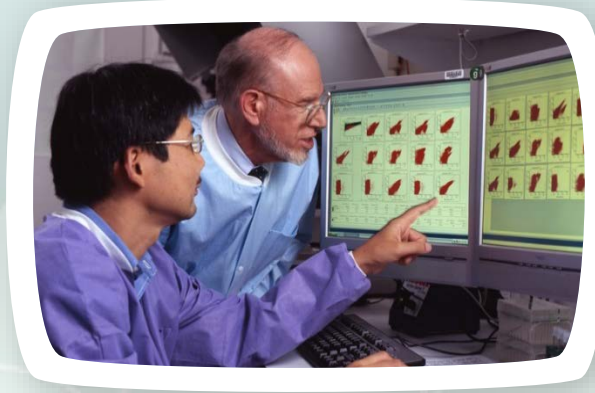
Sometimes the instructions of a cell is damaged. We call it a mutation. A mutation can cause the cell to grow wrong. It then makes more copies of the damaged instructions until a clump of these odd-shaped cells form.





When a clump of odd-shaped cells stick together, a tumor forms.

Some of these cells don't stick together and they find other cells to attach to. The problem is they are still programmed to make copies of themselves, so they create another clump of odd-shaped cells in their new place. This forms another tumor, and when that happens it is called cancer.



You can't catch cancer like you can a cold.

Cancer is not like a cold. You can't catch cancer from anyone that has it. Doctors don't exactly know why cancer happens in some people and not others, but as science and technology advance they get closer to answering that question.