SPECIAL SECTION

Childhood Cancers

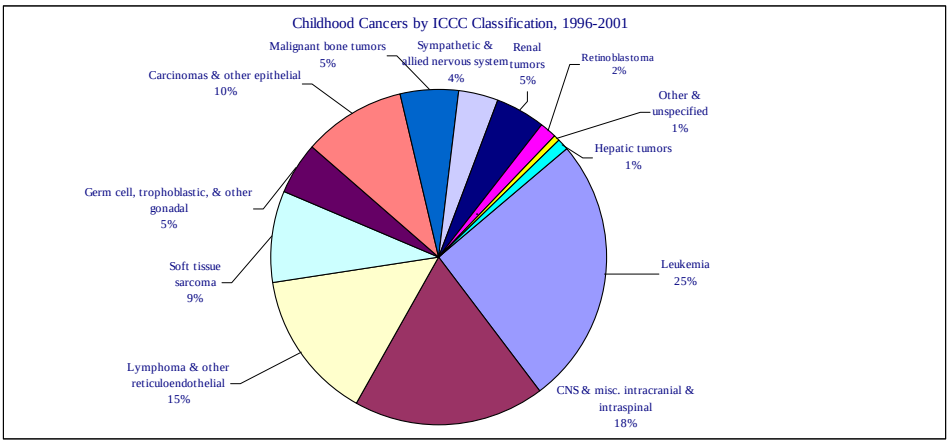
Cancers in children and young adults are only a small percentage (0.3 percent) of all cancers diagnosed in S.C. Although rare, cancer is still the leading cause of death from disease in children under 15, second only to accidents in most age groups. However, because of significant advances in treatment and supportive care, death rates have declined and five-year survival rates have increased almost 40 percent since the 1960s.

There were **153** childhood cancer cases diagnosed in South Carolina in 2001. One hundred and seven cancer cases were diagnosed among children ages 0-14, and forty-six cancer cases were diagnosed among young adults ages 15-19. Leukemia accounts for about 25 percent of childhood cancers diagnosed in this state.

Male children ages 0-14 were more likely to be diagnosed with cancer than female children of the same age in South Carolina. However, among young adults ages 15-19, females have a higher incidence rate than males.

White children in South Carolina are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer than black children or children of other minority races regardless of age. Overall, the number of new cases of childhood cancer is lower in South Carolina than in the nation.

stomach cancer • colorectal cancer • lung cancer • esophageal cancer • cervical cancer • breast cancer • prostate cancer • skin cancer • brain cancer • ovarian cancer • bladder cancer • leukemia • liver cancer • non-hodgkins lymphoma



The anatomical site of the primary tumor is used to categorize cancer among adults, while childhood cancers are classified primarily by tissues into twelve major categories using the International Classification of Childhood Cancers (ICCC).

Key Facts

- Pre- and postnatal exposures can increase the risk of developing some childhood cancers, but many of the causes of childhood cancers remain unknown.
- Infrequently occurring chromosomal disorders and clinical syndromes place some children at a higher risk of developing cancer.
- Survivors of childhood cancer who received chemotherapy and/or radiation are at increased risk of subsequent cancers.