

Code Cracking

Cancer: True or False? Teacher Answer Key

1. Cancer deaths in the United States are increasing.

T **F**

False. According to annual statistics reporting from the American Cancer Society, the death rate from cancer in the US has declined steadily over the past 25 years. As of 2016, the cancer death rate for men and women combined had fallen 27% from its peak in 1991. This decline translates to about 1.5% per year and more than 2.6 million deaths avoided between 1991 and 2016. Although cancer diagnoses have increased, survival rates have increased at an even greater rate.

<https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/facts-and-figures-2019.html>

<https://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2015/02/04/why-are-cancer-rates-increasing/>

2. Cancer is contagious.

T **F**

False. You cannot "catch" cancer. Cancer does not spread from one person to another. However, certain contagious viruses such as HPV or hepatitis, or bacteria such as *helicobacter pylori*, can cause diseases that increase your *risk* of developing cancer.

[https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-](https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/myths#targetText=Is%20cancer%20contagious%3F,of%20organ%20or%20tissue%20transplantation.)

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3. Lunchmeat can cause cancer.

T F

True. Research shows that eating processed meats like bacon and cold cuts can increase your chances for stomach and colorectal cancer. Processed meat includes hot dogs, ham, bacon, sausage, and some deli meats. It refers to meat that has been treated in some way to preserve or flavor it. Processes include salting, curing, fermenting, and smoking.

<https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/world-health-organization-says-processed-meat-causes-cancer.html>

4. There are over one hundred types of cancer.

T F

True. Any replicating cell can become cancerous. Different cancer types are named after the type of tissue where they arise.

<https://www.webmd.com/cancer/default.htm>

5. Unhealthy lifestyle choices when you are young don't affect your chances of getting cancer when you are older. T F

False. Cancer is usually the result of years of exposure to a variety of risk factors. Avoiding some of these risk factors reduces your overall cancer risk.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2515569/>

6. Cancer cells can grow forever. T F

True. Cancer cells are considered immortal. Unlike normal cells, cancer cells have acquired mutations that allow them to divide indefinitely.

<https://academic.oup.com/hmg/article/10/7/677/558541#targetText=Almost%20all%20cancer%20cells%20are,reverse%20transcriptase%20that%20stabilizes%20telomeres.>

7. Cancer cells grow and divide in a controlled fashion. T F

False. Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells.

<https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/cancer>

8. We currently have cures for cancer, but the medical industry keeps them from the public because they make so much money treating cancer patients. T F

False. Doctors and their loved ones also get cancer and would benefit from a cure. If there were a cure for cancer sharing it would bring enormous positive publicity and probable financial gain.

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/everyday-myths/no-there-is-no-hidden-cancer-cure.htm>

9. Cancer develops because of changes in our DNA that result in abnormal gene function. T F

True. Cancer is a genetic disease caused by changes in genes that normally control the growth and death of cells.