

# DAILY SUN

September 2025 issue

OUR LIVES, OUR PAPER.

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**DENIED  
CANCER  
TREATMENT?**

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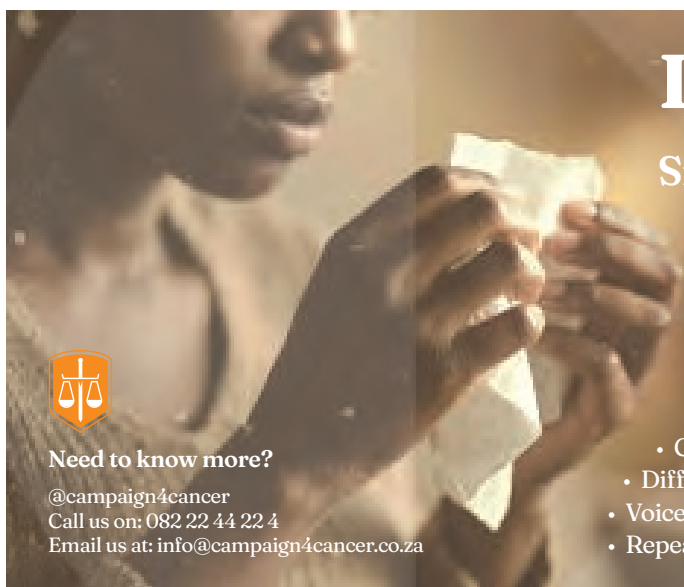
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# ABAPHANTSI

## DEMAND GOAT TO END **CANCER**



### Lung Cancer Awareness

#### Signs and Symptoms to be aware of?

Symptoms of lung cancer can affect the whole body. You often may not have any symptoms of lung cancer until the tumour becomes quite large. You will experience symptoms, such as:

- A cough that does not go away, or gets worse.
- Coughing up blood, even a small amount.
- Feeling short of breath.
- Chest, shoulder or back pain.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Voice changes, becoming gruff or raspy.
- Repeated lung infections (such as pneumonia or bronchitis)

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**See more of the story  
on pg 02...**

In many communities, beliefs about health are shaped through our experiences and the stories we hear (some true, some not). One of these is the idea that cancer is a punishment from ancestors who have been upset or neglected.





# DEMAND GOAT TO END CANCER

## Cancer and Ancestors:

### SEPARATING MYTH FROM MEDICAL FACT

In many communities, stories and beliefs about health are passed down through generations. One of the more persistent myths is the idea that cancer is a punishment from ancestors who have been upset or neglected. While this belief often comes from a place of cultural respect and a desire to understand illness, it's important to look at what science actually says about cancer and why this myth can be harmful.

### WHERE THE MYTH COMES FROM

Cultural traditions often teach us that when something bad happens, it could be a sign of spiritual imbalance. In some families, when someone is diagnosed with cancer, people may believe they've angered their ancestors

or failed to perform certain rituals. This belief can be comforting because it feels like there's a reason behind a devastating disease — but it's not rooted in medical truth.

### THE SCIENTIFIC FACTS

It is a disease caused by changes in our cells that make them grow and spread uncontrollably. These changes can happen for many reasons. It could be genetics where some people inherit DNA changes that increase their cancer risk. It might be from lifestyle factors such as smoking, poor diet and family history of cancer. There may even be environmental exposure like radiation, harmful chemicals, and pollution which contribute to cancer. Sometimes, cancer just happens without a clear cause through random cell mutations.

### WHY THE MYTH CAN BE DANGEROUS

Believing that cancer is caused by upsetting ancestors can prevent people from seeking proper medical treatment. Instead of visiting a doctor, some may focus only on rituals or offerings, losing valuable time for early diagnosis and treatment that could save lives.

### HONOURING ANCESTORS, HELPING HEALTH.

Respecting your heritage and ancestors is important and can bring emotional comfort during illness. But it's equally important to understand that medical care, screening and treatment are what truly fight cancer. You can honour your ancestors while also taking action to protect your health — they would likely want you to live a long, healthy life.

### THE TRUTH

Cancer is a medical condition that requires medical solutions. If you or a loved one notices unusual symptoms — like unexplained lumps, persistent pain or sudden weight loss — seek medical advice as soon as possible.

Let's replace myths with knowledge and empower communities with facts. Ancestors demand goat to end cancer?

No — they want you to get checked, treated and healed.



## DENIED CANCER TREATMENT?

Project ASK aids patients and caregivers who have been denied or given limited access to treatment, benefits, medicine or healthcare. Our Case Managers help patients navigate their way to accessing the treatment they are entitled to, regardless of whether or not they are being treated in a state hospital or belong to a medical scheme, at any stage of their cancer journey. We also advise patients on how to deal with workplace situations arising from their cancer diagnosis.

Being diagnosed with cancer is very overwhelming for a patient and their loved ones. Campaigning for Cancer's mission is to be that someone to help you find credible information about your cancer journey, direct you to support services and aid you in ensuring that you are getting the best possible treatment through advocacy services. Campaigning for Cancer's Project Ask is a free, easily accessible service that helps the patient feel more empowered by steering them through the steps of their cancer journey. The right answers are as important as the proper treatment and at Campaigning for Cancer, we help you get both.

Our aim is to ensure that all South Africans are informed and educated about cancer and their rights and responsibilities as patients, thus allowing cancer patients and their loved ones to make informed decisions regarding their cancer journey and ensure that they better understand and manage their experiences navigating a complex healthcare system as they receive treatment. Ultimately, we aim to improve outcomes and promote efficient, cost-effective care for cancer patients in South Africa.

**We commit to providing the following services to patients and people affected by cancer:**

### ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Through our comprehensive databases and disease resources we can provide a patient, caregiver or loved one of a patient with information about their disease or their treatment and the steps along the journey they are about to undertake or what their patient rights and responsibilities are.

### ACCESS TO SUPPORT

We offer referral to well-established and well-governed support groups. These support groups will provide

guidance, advice and emotional support to survivors and their families, to improve their quality of life in all phases during and after their treatment. Campaigning for Cancer collaborates with a number of support groups and will endeavour, where possible, to ensure that the patient, caregiver or family member is directed to a support group in their area.

### ACCESSING TREATMENT and PATIENT ADVOCACY

We will help the patient, caregiver or family member navigate their way when accessing the treatment they are entitled to, regardless if they are being treated in a state hospital or belong to medical aid, and advise them on the

best ways to deal with workplace situations arising from their cancer diagnosis.

Types of **ACCESS TO TREATMENT** and **PATIENT ADVOCACY** issues we can help with:

Guiding the patient, caregiver or family member through the steps of exercising their rights and processes of appeal with regards to:

- A medical scheme declining their treatment plan or not correctly allocating their treatment in relation to their benefits.
- Helping the patient, caregiver or family member develop treatment motivations for submission to their medical scheme.

- Helping the patient, caregiver or family member apply for ex gratia funding with their medical scheme.
- Helping the patient, caregiver or family member with their cancer diagnosis and treatment services in public hospitals.
- Problems with referrals in public hospitals.
- Unfair treatment in public hospitals.
- Unfair treatment in the workplace.

With rights come responsibilities and we require that the patient, caregiver or family member be aware of their responsibilities towards the process.



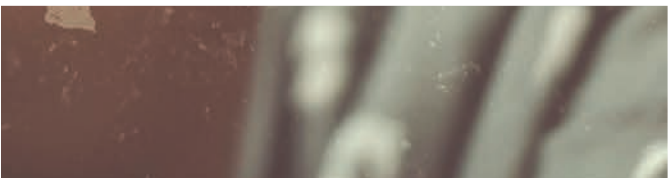
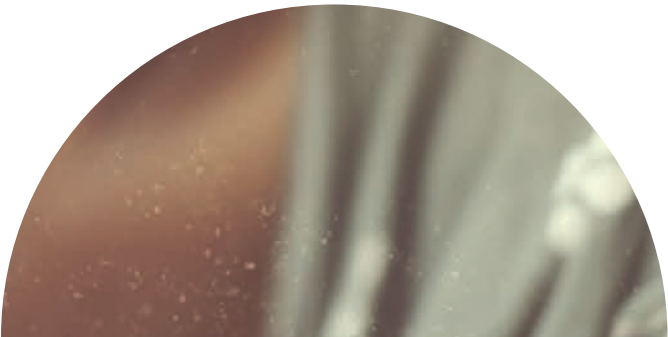
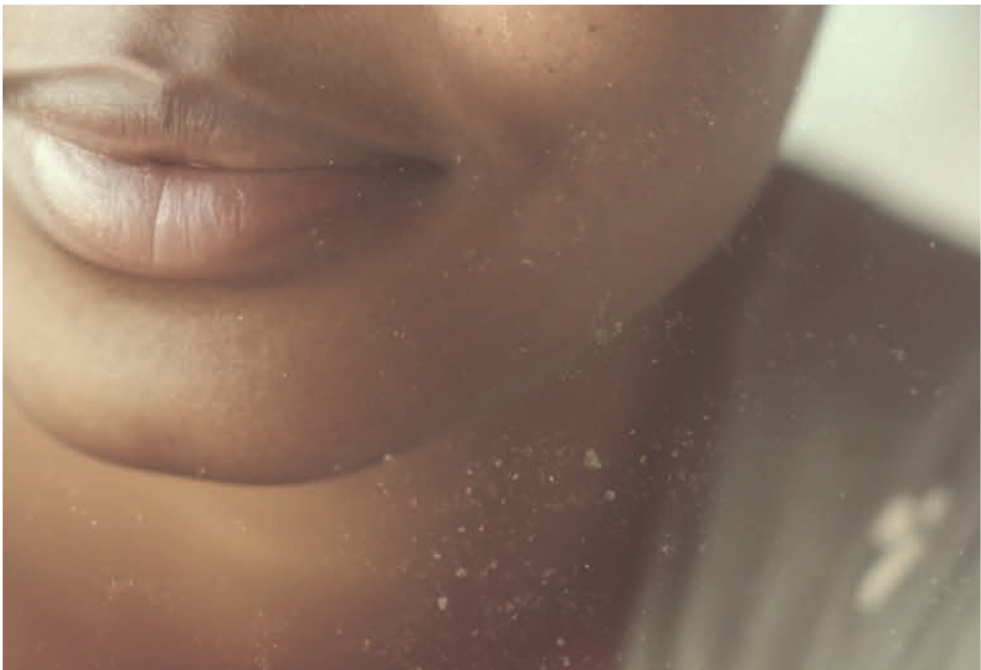
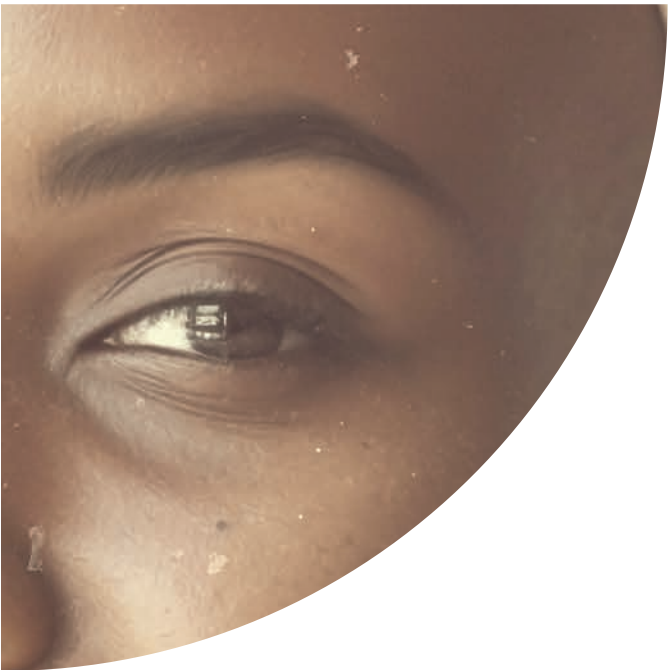
“Campaigning for Cancer’s Project Ask is free”



CAMPAIGNING FOR CANCER







DON'T TAKE  
"NO" FOR  
AN ANSWER

Are you having trouble gaining access to treatment?

If you would like to know more about your rights as a patient or need assistance, call us now and ask.



# TREE HUGGER SUSPECTED OF SPREADING CANCER

## Debunking the Myth: Cancer is contagious.

One of the most damaging misconceptions about cancer is the belief that it is contagious — that you can “catch” it from someone else the way you might catch a cold or flu. This myth not only causes unnecessary fear and stigma, but it can also isolate people who need the most love and support during their cancer journey.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT CANCER AND CONTAGION

#### Cancer is **NOT** contagious.

A healthy person cannot “catch” cancer from someone who has it. Everyday interactions — like hugging, kissing, sharing meals, having sex or even breathing the same air — do not spread cancer. If cancer were contagious, we would see cancer epidemics similar to flu outbreaks or measles transmission. But this is not the case. Cancer is fundamentally different from infectious diseases.

#### Why Cancer Happens More in Some Families.

Sometimes people assume cancer is contagious because they see multiple cases in the same family. In reality, this happens for three main reasons:

- **SHARED GENES:**  
Family members may inherit genetic changes that increase cancer risk.
- **SHARED LIFESTYLES:**  
Diet, smoking, alcohol use, and exercise habits often run in families.
- **SHARED ENVIRONMENTS:**  
Families may all be exposed to the same cancer-causing agents (like polluted air, chemicals, or second-hand smoke).

This clustering of cases is due to risk factors — not because cancer can spread from person to person.

#### The Only “Spread” You Should Worry About

While cancer itself isn’t contagious, some infections caused by viruses or bacteria can increase the risk of certain cancers. For example:

- **HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS (HPV):**  
Linked to cervical, anal and throat cancers.
- **HEPATITIS B AND C:**  
Linked to liver cancer.
- **HELICOBACTER PYLORI (H.PYLORI):**  
Linked to stomach cancer.

In these cases, it’s the infection that spreads — not the cancer. The good news is that vaccines (like the HPV and hepatitis B vaccines), safe practices and treatment of infections can lower these risks dramatically.

#### THE TRUTH

Cancer is not contagious. You cannot “catch” it from someone else. Instead of keeping your distance, the best thing you can do for someone with cancer is offer support, compassion and care. Love and community heal much more than isolation ever could.



## LOTTO WINNER LEAVES IT UNCLAIMED TO AVOID CANCER

### Cancer Has No Borders: Debunking the Myth That It’s Only a Disease of the Wealthy

When people talk about cancer, it’s common to hear the belief that cancer is mainly a disease that affects rich people in developed countries. This myth has existed for decades, but it’s far from the truth — and believing it can prevent people in all communities from recognising risks and seeking lifesaving care.

#### WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE THIS MYTH

Historically, wealthier countries reported higher rates of cancer because they had better healthcare systems that detected and diagnosed cancer more accurately. People lived longer, and age is one of the strongest risk factors for cancer.

Media coverage and research often focused on high-income countries. This made it seem as though cancer was rare in lower-income nations or among poorer communities.

#### THE REALITY: CANCER AFFECTS EVERYONE

Cancer is not bound to wealth, geography or social class. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 60% of the world’s total cancer cases and 70% of cancer deaths occur in

low — and middle-income countries. Limited access to screening and treatment often means cancers are detected later, making them harder to treat. Common cancers like breast, cervical, liver and stomach cancer are widespread in developing regions.

#### WHY THIS MYTH IS HARMFUL

Believing cancer only affects the wealthy can lead to late detection because people ignore symptoms, thinking “It can’t be cancer here.” It also lowers prevention efforts as communities may not prioritise awareness or screenings. And it creates a stigma around the false idea that cancer is caused by lifestyle choices only possible in rich countries.

#### CANCER CARE IS FOR EVERYONE

Cancer can touch anyone — young or old, rich or poor, urban or rural. What truly makes the difference is awareness, early detection and access to treatment. Organisations and healthcare workers are working globally to bring cancer education and care to every corner of the world.

#### THE TRUTH

Cancer is not a disease of wealthy nations — it is a global health issue. Breaking this myth helps ensure that everyone, everywhere, knows the importance of checking symptoms early, getting screened and supporting efforts for better cancer care for all.







GOGO  
DYES  
HAIR  
TO FOOL  
CANCER

Only old people get cancer - Cancer Has No Age Limit

When most people think of cancer, they imagine an older person receiving treatment. This has led to the common myth that only elderly people get cancer. While age is a risk factor, the truth is far more complex — and believing this myth can put younger people at serious risk.

WHERE THIS MYTH COMES FROM

It's true that cancer is more common as people get older. Over time, our cells undergo changes, and the body's ability to repair damaged DNA becomes less efficient. That's why the average age for many cancer diagnoses is around 60.

Because of this, society has often associated cancer strictly with aging, unintentionally overlooking how it affects people of all ages.

THE REALITY

Cancer affects all age groups.

CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

Certain cancers like leukemia, brain tumors and bone cancers are more common in young people than adults.

YOUNG ADULTS (20s–40s)

Breast cancer, cervical cancer, testicular cancer and melanoma are increasingly seen in younger patients.

MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS

Many lifestyle-related cancers (such as colorectal or lung cancer) can develop well before old age. Globally, research shows that millions of people under 50 are diagnosed with cancer each year.

WHY THIS MYTH IS DANGEROUS

It can lead to delayed diagnosis when young people ignore symptoms or don't see a doctor because they believe "I'm too young for cancer." Visits to the doctor to check symptoms and have diagnostic and screening interventions are under-utilised by younger adults who think they are immune. The false stigma of young people not getting

cancer, means they can face disbelief or lack of understanding.

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

Regardless of age, paying attention to your body matters. Unexplained pain, persistent lumps, unusual bleeding or drastic changes in health should never be ignored. Many cancers are highly treatable if caught early.

THE TRUTH

While older age increases risk, cancer does not discriminate by age. Anyone — from children to young adults to seniors — can develop cancer. family cancer prevalence history, your HIV status, and other factors can make you more at risk. Dispelling the myth that only old people get cancer is crucial for promoting awareness, timely medical checks and better survival rates for people of all ages.

What Is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is a cancer that starts in the colon or the rectum. These cancers can also be named colon, rectal or colorectal cancer, depending on where they start. Colon cancer and rectal cancer are often grouped together because they have many features in common.

Signs & Symptoms

- Change in bowel habits includingdiarrhoea/constipation
- Rectal bleeding or blood in stools
- Persistent abdominal discomfort (cramps, gas or pain)
- A feeling that the bowel doesn't empty completely
- Weakness or fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss

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CAMPAIGNING FOR  
CANCER GIVES PATIENTS  
VALUABLE TOOLS,  
ENCOURAGES EARLY  
DIAGNOSIS AND  
COLLECTS DATA FOR  
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS



# SURVIVOR BLAMES BREAST BANK

Breast cancer is caused by carrying money in your bra, so only women get it

BREAST CANCER MYTHS

In many communities, a popular belief is that carrying money in your bra causes breast cancer, and that only women are at risk. These myths are not only false — they can be harmful, preventing people from understanding real cancer risks and seeking proper medical care.

MYTH 1

Carrying Money in Your Bra Causes Breast Cancer. This myth likely started because many women keep cash or small objects in their bras for convenience. Over time, people began associating breast cancer with this habit.

THE TRUTH

There is no scientific evidence linking carrying money, coins or any object in a bra to breast cancer. Breast cancer develops when cells in the breast grow uncontrollably, often due to genetics (family history), hormonal factors, age and lifestyle choices—not physical contact with money or clothing. Items like money do not emit harmful radiation or toxins that could trigger cancer.

MYTH 2

Only Women Get Breast Cancer. Breast cancer is often thought of as a women's disease because women have more breast tissue and higher hormonal risks. However, men also have breast tissue and can develop cancer there.

THE FACTS

According to global cancer data, about 1 in 100 breast cancer cases occurs in men.

Male breast cancer is often diagnosed later because many men don't know they're at risk and may ignore symptoms like lumps or nipple changes. Awareness and early detection are just as important for men as they are for women.

WHY THESE MYTHS ARE HARMFUL

Women may feel guilt or shame for carrying money in their bras, thinking it "caused" their illness. Men may delay medical checks because they believe breast cancer is "only for women." Both myths distract from real prevention and detection methods, such as regular breast checks and mammograms.

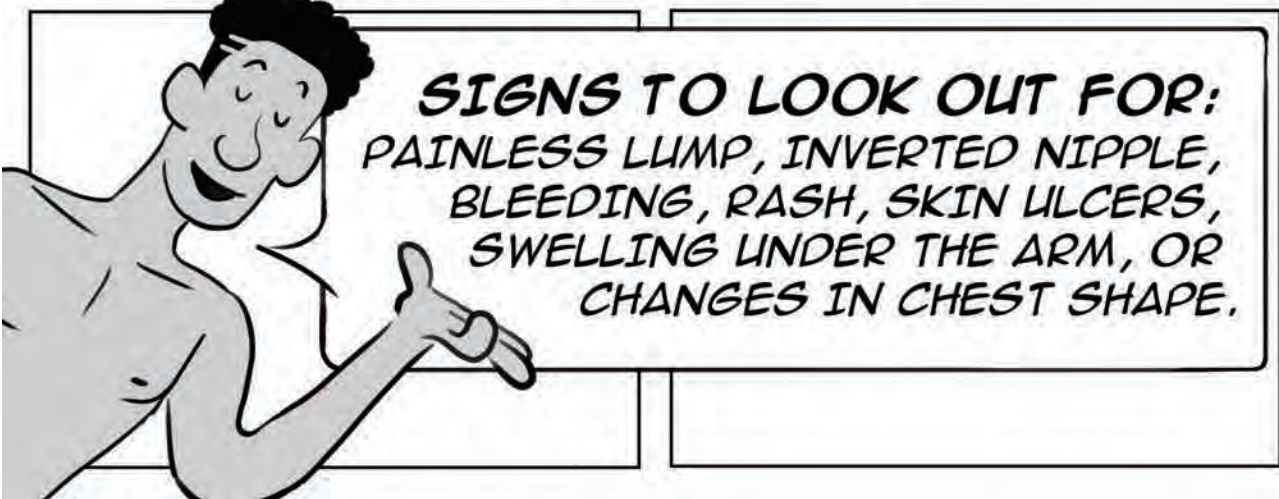
THE TRUTH

Breast cancer is not caused by money in your bra, and it can affect anyone, regardless of gender. Understanding real risk factors—like family history, lifestyle and hormonal changes—helps save lives through early detection and proper treatment.



## BUSTA & THE MYTHS

ILLUSTRATED BY NIKITA KASSIER





# Understanding Cervical Cancer

## What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer is a cancer that occurs at the mouth of the womb. Cervical cancer is the second largest cancer affecting woman in South Africa.

Almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by a virus called Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV is spread through body fluids and by having unprotected sex. You can reduce your risk of contracting HPV by having protected sex. In addition, you must have a cervical screening every 10 years from the age of 30.

## Signs & Symptoms

- Bleeding between regular menstrual days.
- Heavier and longer menstrual periods than usual.
- Bleeding during sexual intercourse.
- Pelvic pain and lower back pain not related to your menstrual cycle.
- If menses reappear after a year.
- Unusual discharge.
- Pain during intercourse.
- Vaginal warts.

## Need to know more?

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# Children don't get cancer

DEBUNKING THE MYTH

One of the most harmful myths about cancer is the belief that children don't get cancer.

This misconception can delay diagnosis, reduce awareness and tragically, cost lives. While cancer is often associated with adults, children are also vulnerable — though the types of cancer they develop are usually very different.

THE FACTS ABOUT CHILDHOOD CANCER

Childhood cancers are unique from adult cancers. They typically develop in growing cells such as those found in the bone marrow, blood, kidneys and nervous system tissues.

The most common childhood cancer is leukaemia, followed by brain tumours and other solid tumours. Life-threatening blood disorders such as aplastic anaemia, thalassaemia and ITP also affect children. Worldwide, childhood cancer occurs in about 150 out of every million children. In South Africa, it is estimated that 1 in 600 children will be affected by cancer before the age of 16.

THE GOOD NEWS: CHILDHOOD CANCER CAN BE TREATED

While childhood cancer is a devastating diagnosis, there is hope. If diagnosed early, 70%–85% of children can be cured. Advances in medicine and treatment mean that many children go on to live full, healthy lives after cancer.

THE CHALLENGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Unfortunately, in South Africa the outcomes are not as positive as they could be.

Less than half of children are diagnosed early enough to reach a treatment centre in time. Many are only diagnosed at advanced stages, when treatment options are limited. Shockingly, about half of children with

cancer are never diagnosed at all and, therefore, receive no treatment.

This highlights the urgent need for awareness, education and improved access to healthcare.

WHY THE MYTH IS HARMFUL

Believing that children don't get cancer leads to dangerous delays.

Parents may dismiss early symptoms like persistent fevers, weight loss, lumps or fatigue. Healthcare providers may overlook cancer as a possibility. Communities may lack the awareness needed to encourage early diagnosis and treatment.

THE TRUTH

Children do get cancer.

While rare compared to adult cancers, childhood cancer is real, serious and life-threatening—but early detection can save lives. The more people understand the facts, the better chance we have of improving survival rates for children in South Africa and beyond.



# Cancer is a death sentence

DEBUNKING THE MYTH

For decades, the word cancer has been surrounded by fear and despair. One of the most common and harmful myths is that a cancer diagnosis automatically means death. While this may have been closer to the truth many years ago, it is no longer the case today. Thanks to advances in medical science, many people with cancer now live long, fulfilling lives.

THE FACTS ABOUT CANCER SURVIVAL

In the 1970s, the overall median survival time for all cancer types was just 1 year. By 2010, this had increased to 6 years due to upgrades in early detection and treatments, according to Macmillan Cancer Support.

THIS DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IS THE RESULT OF ADVANCES IN

- Early detection and screening – cancers are often caught earlier, when they are easier to treat Better surgical techniques – less invasive and more precise surgeries save lives. Improved radiotherapy and diagnostics – targeting cancer more effectively.
- New medicines and therapies – including chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and targeted treatments.

CANCERS WITH IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Some cancers that were once considered a near certain death sentence, now have much higher survival rates:

- Breast cancer – early detection and treatment have dramatically improved survival.
- Colon cancer – the biggest leap in median survival, with a 17-fold increase in outcomes.
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma - significant advances in treatment options for this cancer of the lymph nodes which help fight infections in your body.

WHY THIS MYTH IS HARMFUL

Believing that cancer equals death can lead to

- Hopelessness: Patients may feel there's no point in seeking treatment.
- Late diagnosis: People might ignore symptoms, thinking "There's nothing that can be done."
- Stigma: Families may hide cancer diagnoses, making it harder for patients to get support.

THE TRUTH

Cancer is not a death sentence. While it remains a serious disease, medical progress has transformed survival rates and treatment outcomes. Many cancers can now be cured, and even when a cure isn't possible, treatment can help people live longer and with a better quality of life.

Early detection, advances in medicine and supportive care mean that a cancer diagnosis today carries far more hope than fear. The message is clear: with awareness, action and treatment, cancer can be fought — and often beaten.





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