

Spring Cabinet - 28 April 2023

CHILDHOOD CANCER

Each year, on average 880 children under the age of 15 are diagnosed with cancer and 150 die from the disease. Although this makes cancer the second leading cause of death by disease among Canadian children, cancer is still relatively rare in this age group.

Because of major treatment advances in recent decades, 85% of children with cancer now survive 5 years or more.

Over the past four decades, the environment has changed significantly, with more and more chemicals entering the air and water. Combined with genetic traits, this appears to have spurred a sharp increase in a variety of childhood cancers,

Only 5–10% of all cancer cases can be attributed to genetic defects, whereas the remaining 90–95% have their roots in the environment and lifestyle.

Factors contributing to the development of cancers in the environment - Lifestyle factors (nutrition, second hand smoke, physical activity) Natural occurring exposures (ultraviolet light, radon gas, infectious agents) Medical treatments (radiation and medicine).

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