How Cancer Spreads Demonstration

Objective: To demonstrate how cancer spreads.

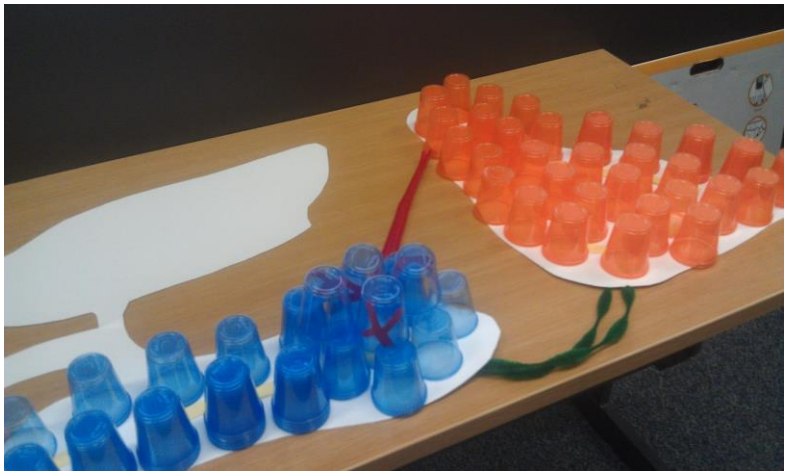
Helpful Materials: A large lung and a liver with yellow-dashed lines (represent road lines), two packets of Solo cups in two different colors, a few solo cups both colors marked with a red "X", two green pipe cleaners, two red pipe cleaners.
*NOTE: This activity can also be done at an individual level with the smaller liver and lung cutouts and ketchup cups.

Directions: The activity is best done after completing the "Abnormal Cell Growth Demonstration" activity. Have the entire group of participants surround the large cut out organs from the "Abnormal Cell Growth Demonstration."

Have participants demonstrate a cancerous abnormal cell growth in the lungs. Make sure the participants use the Solo cups with the red "X" to denote cancer.

Say: The green pipe cleaners represent our body's lymph nodes. Lymph nodes are small, oval-shaped organs of the immune system. Lymph is the fluid that circulates throughout our body. The red pipe cleaners represent our bloodstream. The bloodstream and the lymph nodes are the highways that interconnect the different parts of our body.

Have participants connect the organs with the pipe cleaners.



Say: When a cancerous pile-up happens in the lungs, the new cancer cells might not have any place to go. If the pile-up is too large, the cancerous cells move through the lymph nodes and bloodstream to other organs, like the liver.

Have participants move the cancerous cells through the lymph nodes and bloodstream to the liver.

Say: As you can see by the color of the cups, the cancerous lung cells have spread to the liver. Just because the cancerous cell moved from one organ to the other doesn't mean that it changes what type of cancer it is. That is why when lung cancer cells spread to the liver, it doesn't mean that it is no longer lung cancer. This person's diagnosis would be lung cancer which spread or metastasized to the liver (not lung and liver cancer).

Have each group deconstruct the abnormal cell growth demonstration and re-teach it back to other participants.