

Lucy has a tumour



***Lucy has a tumour* is a storybook written especially for parents and carers to read with children to help them understand what cancer is and the treatment it involves.**

At the back of the book you will find a useful glossary of difficult words you will come across when dealing with doctors and hospitals.



CLIC Sargent is the UK's leading cancer charity for children and young people, and their families. We provide clinical, practical and emotional support to help them cope with cancer and get the most out of life.

Lucy has a tumour

By Victoria Barton

Medical reviewers for this edition: Dr Anna Jenkins and Dr Dan Yeomanson,
Consultant Paediatric Oncologists

Illustration by
Tony Harris



This book belongs to.....



This is Lucy. She is five years old and lives with her mum and brother Harry who is nine. Lucy's dad does not live with them, but they see him regularly.

Lucy has lots of things she enjoys. She loves running, skipping, and doing cartwheels, but most of all she likes to play with her best friend Leyla and her two kittens, Smudge and Bertie.



One morning, just as everyone was getting ready for school, Lucy told her mum that her tummy was hurting and she felt really unwell. Dad came round to take Harry to school and Mum stayed with Lucy. Lucy began to feel better after a while and managed to get into school at lunchtime, but the next day she woke up feeling poorly again.

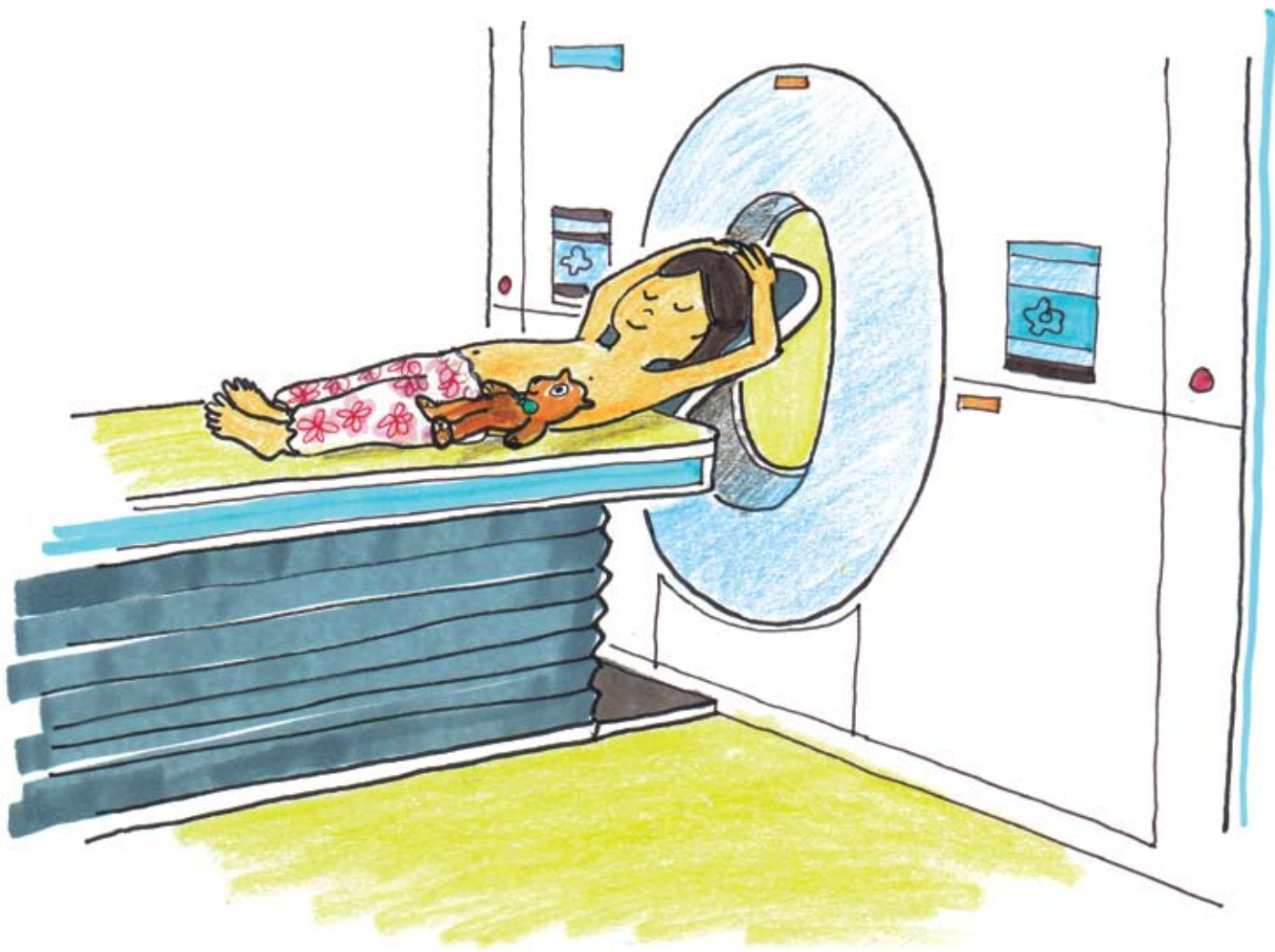


Lucy and her mum went to see the doctor to see why Lucy's tummy kept hurting. The doctor gave her some medicine but it did not seem to work and after a few days he sent Lucy to the hospital to see if they knew what was wrong.



The hospital doctor said that they needed to find out why Lucy was so ill and she would have to stay on the children's ward for a few days for tests. There were other children on the ward and her mum was able to stay with her while her dad looked after Harry and visited each day.

Lucy had to have some special tests at the hospital; some were *blood tests* and one of them was a scan. She had to lie very still for quite a long time while the scanner took pictures of the inside of her body. It did not hurt a bit and Lucy was very good at keeping still.



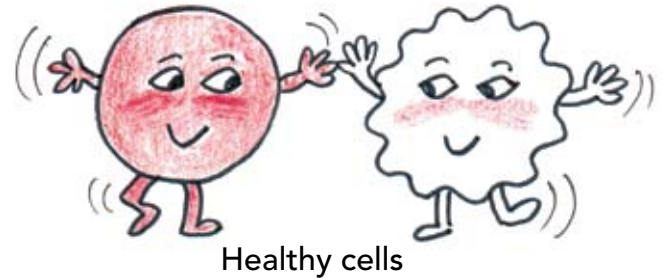
After a few days the doctor saw Lucy, her mum and dad. He explained that the pictures showed that Lucy had a lump inside her tummy, and this was why her tummy hurt. The doctor said the lump was called a tumour and was a type of *cancer*.



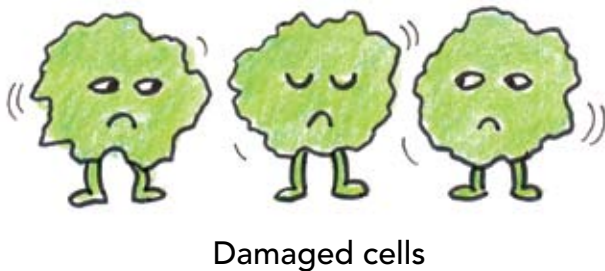
"What is *cancer*?" Lucy asked.

* Words in *italics* are explained under 'What these words mean' at the back of this book.

The doctor explained that “Everyone’s body is made up of millions of tiny cells, so tiny you cannot see them without a microscope. These cells go to make different things our bodies need – like blood, muscle or bone.

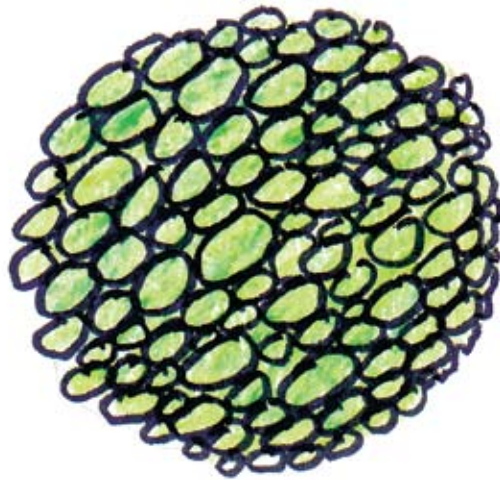


Sometimes the cells start to divide up to make new cells too quickly and do not do their job properly. Lots of damaged cells are made and they stop the good cells from working properly. This is called *cancer*. When the damaged cells do not know what



they should do they begin to stick together to form a lump. This is called a tumour. There are lots of different kinds of *cancer*.”

To decide on the best treatment for Lucy she needed a small *operation*, called a *biopsy*, so that the doctor could look at a tiny sample of the tumour under a microscope.





The next day Harry came to see Lucy and he was able to play with her and some of the other children. The ward had lots of toys and a computer, there was lots to do even if you did not feel well enough to get out of bed.

It can take a few days for the doctors to get the results of all the tests, so when Lucy was well enough she went home. Harry was really pleased Lucy was back home, but she got lots of presents and he felt left out. Mum and Dad soon realised that everyone was making a fuss of Lucy and made sure that Harry was always included.

“After all,” Dad said, “Harry and I have had a hard time too and missed them both when they were at the hospital.”





Soon Lucy had to go back to the hospital to see what the tests showed. Mum and Lucy met the doctor who explained that Lucy would need to have some medicines called *chemotherapy*. She might also need to have an *operation* and possibly some other treatment, called *radiotherapy*, later on.

He explained that with *chemotherapy* some would be tablets and some would be medicine that would go through a central line. There are different types of central lines – a *broviac*, a *portacath* and a *Hickman line*. Often the line is called a *Wiggly!* The treatment would take some months but she would not be in hospital all the time.



Soon it was time to go back to the hospital and start her treatment. The *chemotherapy* went through the special 'wiggly line' that Lucy had in her chest. It did not hurt but sometimes made her feel a bit funny. When the *chemotherapy* had finished the machine beeped!



As a result of the *chemotherapy* Lucy's hair began to fall out, just like Dad had said it would. Even though he had explained that it would not hurt when her hair fell out, Lucy had not really believed him. But he was right. Dad also said that Lucy's hair would grow back when she had finished her treatment.

Lucy thought she would wear a cap or scarf if she got cold.



At the clinic Lucy saw lots of other boys and girls, some of the girls had wigs, some wore hats or caps or scarves, and some already had their own hair again. They often talked and played together.





Lucy had lots of *chemotherapy* to try to shrink the tumour. It took a long time but after each course she was able to go home. Sometimes she felt sick, and sometimes she got an infection – she would get a temperature and not feel well. When this happened she had to go to hospital for special medicine. Once she had to have a *blood transfusion* to help her have more energy. The new blood went down the wiggly line so it did not hurt and it made her feel better.

Lucy quite liked being on the ward as the play specialists and teachers helped her to make things when she felt well enough. Lucy made friends with a boy called Joe who had *leukaemia* and a girl called Sarah who had a tumour in her leg.

There was a boy called Imran who had to stay in his room because he was having a *bone marrow transplant* – everyone had to wave to him through his window. Imran had to stay in his room until his bone marrow started to work properly.



One day Lucy saw Joe come to the ward, but he was not allowed to play with anyone. Lucy asked one of the nurses why she could not go and see him. She was told that Joe had come for some special medicine to help stop him catching chickenpox from his friend at school who had woken up one morning with spots all over his body. Children who are having *chemotherapy* can be very unwell if they catch chickenpox or measles, so if they meet someone who has it, they should tell their doctor as they might have to go to hospital.



The doctor told Lucy that the *chemotherapy* had made the tumour smaller and she would now have an *operation* to take it out.

The doctor was happy for Mum or Dad to be with Lucy until she had her anaesthetic and they would be by her bed when she woke up.

While Lucy was getting better Mum, Dad and Grandad came to read her stories and she was given lots of cuddles. The doctors and nurses were very kind and answered any questions that they had.



Some time after Lucy had her *operation* she was able to go home for a little while. Lucy was beginning to feel better and was able to play with Harry and her friend Leyla, but she was not well enough to play with the kittens and she really missed that.



Sometimes Lucy felt well enough to go to school for a little while and see her friends. When she was not well enough for school, Mrs Johns, a teacher, came and gave her lessons at home.

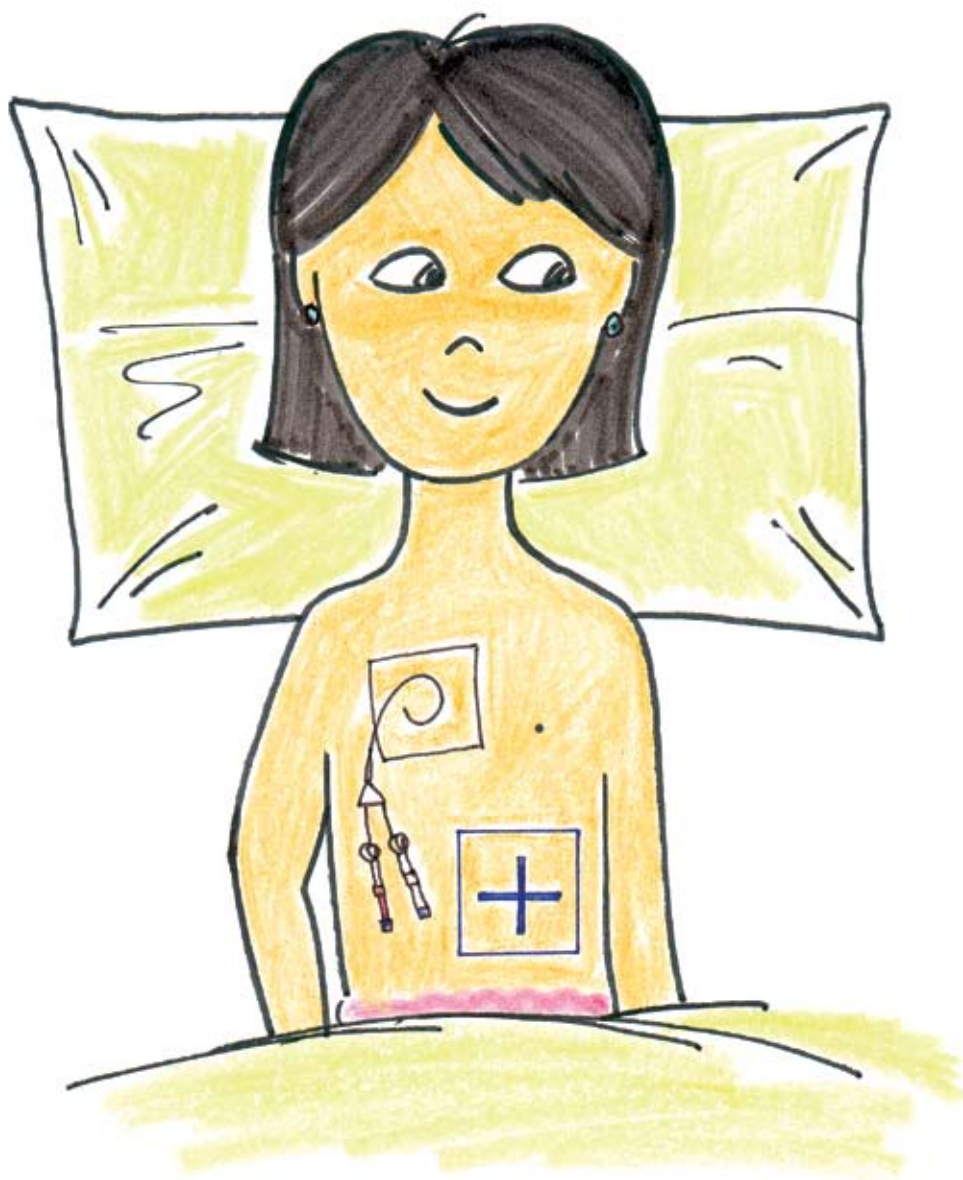
Lucy really enjoyed that. Mum said the lessons would help her to keep up with the work her friends were doing in school.



After her *operation* Lucy had more tests and her doctor said she needed to have *radiotherapy*. He told Lucy that she might get very tired and she would probably have to miss more school.

Lucy did not mind the *radiotherapy*, it was like being in a space ship where she had to stay very still. The doctor helped Lucy get on a special bed that moved up and down and she had lines drawn on her tummy to show where the rays should go to make her better.

After a while all Lucy's treatment had finished and soon her line would be taken out. The doctor said she would only need to come to the hospital for check-ups and tests to make sure she was growing properly and keeping well.



Harry helped Mum and Dad to arrange a surprise party for Lucy. All her friends came and although she was not quite well enough to do cartwheels Lucy had a wonderful time. The biggest surprise was a little kitten all of her own...





...What do you think she called her? Wiggly!

What these words mean

You may hear lots of strange new words when you're in hospital. Below we explain what some of them mean. If you're unsure about any others, just ask your doctor or nurse.

BIOPSY

When a piece of the tumour is taken out and looked at under a microscope.

BLOOD TEST

When a tiny sample of your blood is looked at to see how many red cells, white cells and platelets you have (this is called a full blood count or FBC).

BLOOD/PLATELET TRANSFUSION

When your blood count is low you may need extra blood to help you feel better.

BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT

When you are given a new set of blood-forming cells which then produce healthy new red and white cells.

BROVIAC

One or two lines are inserted in a vein under anaesthetic, the end comes out of a small hole in your skin on your chest.

What these words mean

CANCER

When the cells in your body become abnormal (bad) and continue to grow on their own, out of control.

CHEMOTHERAPY

A mixture of different medicines which treat cancer.

HICKMAN LINE

A long plastic tube inserted into one of the big veins (blood vessels) in your body, usually your neck. The end comes out through a small hole in the skin on your chest. This is inserted under general anaesthetic.

LEUKAEMIA

A form of cancer when the factory that makes your blood is not working properly.

OPERATION

Where you have some medicine called anaesthetic to make you have a special sleep and then the doctors can have a look at your body without hurting you.

What these words mean

PORTACATH

A device, or bobble, is inserted under the skin near the armpit under general anaesthetic and a very thin tube (the line) then runs under the skin to the main vein in the neck. If treatment is given or blood taken, 'magic cream' is put on to the skin covering the bobble beforehand – to make it go numb so it will not hurt so much when the needle goes in.

RADIOTHERAPY

Is where very special rays are pointed at the tumour. The job of the rays is to try to get rid of even the tiniest scrap of tumour that might be left after the operation and chemotherapy.

Do you have any questions, or need some help?



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You can also visit our website at
www.clicsargent.org.uk
or email us at info@clicsargent.org.uk

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