

CANCER ESSENTIALS

What Is Cancer?

Cancer is a generic term for a large group of diseases that can affect any part of the body.

Cancer is the rapid creation of abnormal cells that grow beyond their usual boundaries, and which can then invade adjoining parts of the body and spread to other organs. Cancer harms the body when altered cells divide uncontrollably to form lumps or masses of tissue called tumors (except in the case of leukemia where cancer prohibits normal blood function by abnormal cell division in the blood stream).

Cancer Classification

There are five broad groups that are used to classify cancer.

- Carcinomas are characterized by cells that cover internal and external parts of the body such as lung, breast, and colon cancer.
- Sarcomas are characterized by cells that are located in bone, cartilage, fat, connective tissue, muscle, and other supportive tissues.
- Lymphomas are cancers that begin in the lymph nodes and immune system tissues.
- Leukemias are cancers that begin in the bone marrow and often accumulate in the bloodstream.
- Adenomas are cancers that arise in the thyroid, the pituitary gland, the adrenal gland, and other glandular tissues.

Risk Factors For Cancer:



Symptoms

Cancer symptoms are quite varied and depend on where the cancer is located

- Breast changes such as Change in size or shape of the breast or nipple or Change in texture of breast skin
- A thickening or lump on or under the skin
- Changes in bowel habits
- Difficult or painful urination
- Weight gain or loss with no known reason
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained night sweats
- Unusual bleeding or discharge, including: Blood in the urine, Vaginal bleeding, Blood in the stool
- Feeling weak or very tired

Treatment

Cancer treatment depends on the type of cancer, the stage of the cancer (how much it has spread), age, health status, and additional personal characteristics. There is no single treatment for cancer, and patients often receive a combination of therapies and palliative care.

Surgery

Surgery is the oldest known treatment for cancer. If a cancer has not metastasized, it is possible to completely cure a patient by surgically removing the cancer from the body. This is often seen in the removal of the prostate or a breast or testicle.

Radiation

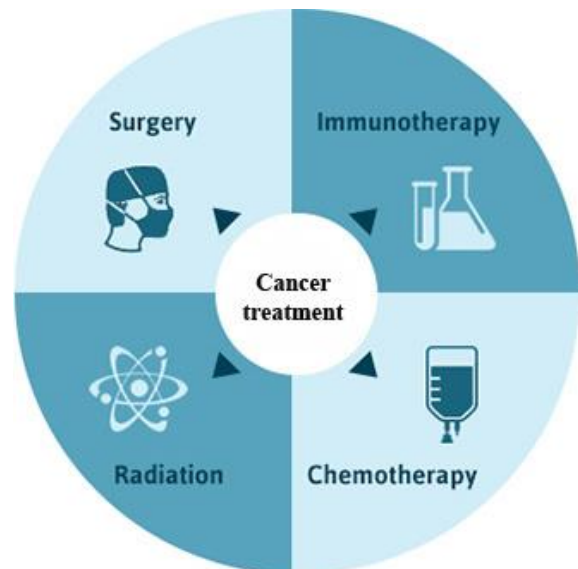
Radiation treatment, destroys cancer by focusing high-energy rays on the cancer cells

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy utilizes chemicals that interfere with the cell division process - damaging proteins or DNA - so that cancer cells will commit suicide.

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy aims to get the body's immune system to fight the tumor by Stimulating own immune system to work harder or smarter to attack cancer cells.



Facts on Cancer

- Cancer is considered to be one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the numbers of new cancer cases is expected to rise by about 70% over the next 20 years.
- According to the American Cancer Society, Cancer is the second most common cause of death and accounts for nearly 1 of every 4 deaths.
- It is believed that cancer risk can be reduced by avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol intake, limiting UV ray exposure and maintaining a healthy diet, level of fitness and seeking regular medical care.
- The most common sites of cancer among men are lung, prostate, colon, rectum, stomach and liver.
- The most common sites of cancer among women are breast, colon, rectum, lung, cervix and stomach.

Reference:

Micromedex's care notes systems online 2.0
National cancer institute
World health organisation