

Serious Illnesses Resources

Living with Cancer

Cancer is defined as diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control and can invade nearby tissues. Cancer cells can also spread to other parts of the body through the blood and lymph systems. There are several main types of cancer. Carcinoma is cancer that begins in the skin or in tissues that

line or cover internal organs. Sarcoma is cancer that begins in bone, cartilage, fat, muscle, blood vessels, or other connective or supportive tissue. Leukemia is cancer that begins in blood-forming tissue, such as the bone marrow, and causes too many abnormal blood cells to be made. Lymphoma and multiple myeloma are cancers that begin in the cells of the immune system. Central nervous system cancers are cancers that begin in the tissues of the brain and spinal cord. Source: Cancer.org

Risk Factors

- Tobacco use is the cause of about 22% of cancer deaths.
- 10% are due to obesity, poor diet, lack of physical activity, or excessive drinking of alcohol.
- Other factors include certain infections, exposure to ionizing radiation, and environmental pollutants.

Malignant Vs. Benign

A tumor is an abnormal lump or growth of cells. When the cells in the tumor are normal, it is benign. Something just went wrong, and they overgrew and produced a lump. When the cells are abnormal and can grow uncontrollably, they are cancerous cells, and the tumor is malignant. Although most benign tumors are not life-threatening, many types of benign tumors have the potential to become cancerous (malignant) through a process known as tumor progression. For this reason and other possible negative health effects, some benign tumors are removed by surgery.

Most Known Cancers (Source: World Health Organization)

- Lung (2.09 million cases)
- Breast (2.09 million cases)
- Colorectal (1.80 million cases)
- Prostate (1.28 million cases)
- Skin cancer (non-melanoma) (1.04 million cases)
- Stomach (1.03 million cases)

Treatment Options (Source: MayoClinic)

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Bone marrow transplant
- Immunotherapy
- Hormone therapy
- Targeted drug therapy
- Cryoablation

Cancer Stages

- Stage 0- Abnormal cells are present but have not spread to nearby tissue. Also called carcinoma in situ or CIS. CIS is not cancer, but it may become cancer.
- Stage I, Stage II, and Stage III- Cancer is present. The higher the number, the larger the cancer tumor and the more it has spread into nearby tissues.
- Stage IV - The cancer has spread to distant parts of the body.

Resources
[American Cancer Association](#)
[Cancer Center](#)
[World Health Organization](#)