



CANCER BASICS

care and education for cancer patients
and those who love them

Approximately
**1 in every 2 men and
2 in every 3 women will
develop cancer in their lifetime.**

CANCER

A group of diseases involving abnormal cells that have the ability to spread to other parts of the body.

Not all tumors are cancerous!

Benign tumors do not spread to other parts of the body.

Malignant tumors are cancerous and can spread.

Metastasis: Cancer that has spread to another part of the body. Cancer can spread locally, through the lymphatic system, or through the blood.

CLASSIFICATIONS

Describes the type of tissue in which the cancer cells begin to develop.

Carcinoma: Cancers that originate in the tissue that lines organs and tubes (breast, prostate, lung, pancreas, colon)

Lymphoma and leukemia: originates in lymphatic tissue and blood, respectively

Myeloma: originates in the bone marrow

Sarcoma: originates in connective or supportive tissue (bone, cartilage, fat, nerve)

STAGING

Classification of the extent of the disease. A numerical system is used to classify the extent of disease. The higher the number, the more serious the disease.

Stage 0

Cancer limited to surface cells

Stage I

Cancer limited to tissue of origin

Stage II

Limited local spread of cancerous cells

Stage III

Extensive local and regional spread

Stage IV

Distant metastasis

COMMON TYPES OF TREATMENT

Surgery: Used to prevent, diagnose, stage, and treat cancer.

Biopsy: Often done to help diagnose cancer. This involves removing a small piece of tissue and testing it.

Chemotherapy: the use of medicines and/or drugs to treat cancer. Chemotherapy works throughout the whole body, and is used to kill cancer cells (adjuvant therapy), or shrink a tumor before surgery (neoadjuvant therapy). Chemotherapy is usually given at regular intervals, called cycles. Typically, a cycle may be a dose of drugs followed by several days without treatment, to give time for the cells to recover from drug side effects.

Radiation: uses high-energy particles to destroy cancer cells.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

From surgery: pain, limited range of motion, fatigue, changes in body image

From chemotherapy: fatigue, nausea, vomiting, pain, mouth sores, constipation, blood disorders, cardiovascular dysfunction, muscle weakness, neurological disorders

From radiation: fatigue, loss of appetite, skin changes (red, swollen, blistered, sunburned, dry)

