

Symptoms of cancer.

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Editorial Note

A Cancer is a term used to describe a group of diseases characterised by abnormal cell proliferation that has the potential to infiltrate or spread to other parts of the body. Benign tumours, on the other hand, do not spread. A lump, unusual bleeding, a persistent cough, unexplained weight loss, and a change in bowel movements are all possible indications and symptoms. While these signs and symptoms may suggest cancer, they could also signal something else. Tobacco usage is responsible for approximately 22% of cancer fatalities. Obesity, poor diet, lack of physical activity, and excessive alcohol use account for the remaining 10%. Other concerns include infections, ionising radiation exposure, and exposure to contaminants in the environment. Infections such as *Helicobacter pylori*, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, human papillomavirus infection, Epstein-Barr virus, and human immunodeficiency virus cause 15% of malignancies in the poor world (HIV). These factors work through altering a cell's genes, at least in part. Before cancer begins, multiple genetic changes are usually required. Inherited genetic abnormalities are responsible for about 5–10% of malignancies. Certain indications and symptoms, as well as screening tests, can help diagnose cancer. Medical imaging and biopsies are usually used to further examine and confirm the diagnosis. Not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol intake, eating plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, vaccination against certain infectious diseases, limiting consumption of processed meat and red meat, and limiting exposure to direct sunlight can all help to reduce the risk of certain cancers. Cervical and colorectal cancers benefit from early detection through screening. The benefits of breast cancer screening are debatable. Radiation therapy, surgery, chemotherapy, and targeted therapy are frequently used to treat cancer. Pain and symptom management are crucial aspects of treatment. Palliative care is especially crucial for patients who are suffering from a terminal illness.

Symptoms

Cancer has no symptoms when it first appears. As the tumour develops or ulcerates, signs and symptoms appear. The outcomes are determined by the type and location of the malignancy. There aren't many symptoms that are unique. Many of these are common among people who have other

health problems. Cancer can be difficult to detect and is known as a "great imitator."

Local symptoms: Local symptoms may arise as a result of the tumor's bulk or ulceration. For example, lung cancer can produce bronchus obstruction, resulting in cough or pneumonia; esophageal cancer can induce esophageal narrowing, making swallowing difficult or unpleasant; and colorectal cancer can create bowel narrowing or blockages, disrupting bowel habits. Breast or testicular masses might cause visible lumps. Coughing up blood (lung cancer), anaemia or rectal bleeding (colon cancer), blood in the urine (bladder cancer), or irregular vaginal bleeding can all be indicators of ulceration (endometrial or cervical cancer).

Systemic symptoms: The body's response to the cancer may cause systemic symptoms. Fatigue, unintended weight loss, or skin changes are examples of this. Cachexia is a condition that occurs when cancer causes a systemic inflammatory response that result in persistent muscle loss and weakening. A persistent fever can be caused by tumours such as Hodgkin disease, leukemias, and cancers of the liver or kidney. Paraneoplastic syndromes are cancer-related systemic symptoms induced by hormones or other chemicals released by the tumour.

Metastasis: The spread of cancer to other parts of the body is known as metastasis. The disseminated cancers are referred to as metastatic tumours, whereas the primary tumour is referred to as the primary tumour. Almost all malignancies have the potential to spread. The majority of cancer deaths are caused by metastasized cancer. Metastasis is a typical occurrence in late-stage cancer that can occur through the blood, lymphatic system, or both. Local invasion, intravasation into the blood or lymph, circulation across the body, extravasation into new tissue, proliferation, and angiogenesis are the typical phases in metastasis.

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