



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at The Reschini Group

Anyone can develop cancer, but the risk increases with age, and may be greater than you think. In the U.S., approximately one in two men and one in three women will develop cancer sometime in their lives.

CANCER: LEARNING THE FACTS

Killing more than 500,000 Americans a year, cancer is the second most common cause of death in the United States.

Definition and Causes

Cancer is a term for diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control and can invade other tissues. Cancer cells spread to other parts of the body through the blood and lymph systems. The disease can be caused by both external elements such as tobacco, chemicals, radiation, and infectious organisms; and internal elements, like inherited gene mutations, metabolic mutations, and immune conditions.

Types

There are more than 100 variations of cancer. Some of the most common include:

- *Carcinoma* – begins in the skin or in tissues that line or cover internal organs
- *Sarcoma* – begins in bone, cartilage, fat, muscle, blood vessels, or other connective or supportive tissue
- *Leukemia* – starts in blood-forming tissue such as the bone marrow, and causes large numbers of abnormal blood cells to be produced and enter the blood
- *Lymphoma/myeloma* – cancers that begin in the cells of the immune system
- *Central nervous system cancers* – begin in the tissues of the brain and spinal cord

Cancer Stages

Staging describes the extent or severity of an individual's cancer and is based on the extent of the original tumor and spreading throughout the body.

Staging is important for three reasons:

1. It helps with a physician's treatment
2. It can be used to estimate the patient's prognosis
3. It is helpful for determining patient eligibility for clinical trials

The staging process is complicated, but in general, cancer is classified from stages I (early onset) to IV (advanced).

Treatment

Depending on the type of cancer, there are a variety of treatments, including chemotherapy, surgery, radiation, biological therapy, hormone therapy, and targeted therapy. The 5-year survival rate after cancer is 67 percent, and the 10-year survival rate among children is 75 percent. Almost 12 million people with a previous diagnosis of cancer are estimated to be living today.

Coping Techniques

Depression, confusion and panic, along with the disease-related difficulties of fatigue, pain, and medical costs can often accompany a diagnosis of cancer. It is important for affected individuals to be surrounded by compassionate family and friends. Support groups can also be a great source of comfort.

Prevention

Any cancer caused by smoking or drinking alcohol can be prevented entirely. Smoking causes about 30 percent of all deaths from cancer in the United States. In addition, a variety of cancer types have been linked to obesity, a sedentary lifestyle, and poor nutrition. Skin cancer can also be avoided by using sunscreen or staying out of the sun entirely. Regular preventive cancer screenings are an important part of an individual's medical routine.

Source: www.cancer.gov

