

Cancer Awareness and Screening

What You Should Know

With decreasing incidence of communicable diseases and effective treatments for them and increasing life expectancy and changing lifestyles, non communicable diseases like cancer is becoming one of the biggest challenges in the world and India and estimated to cause more than 15% of all deaths and an even higher percentage of morbidity and disability

What Cause Cancer and is every cancer the Same?

Cancer is an uncontrolled overgrowth of abnormal cells, due to complex interplay of reasons including Genetics (BRCA mutation, Lynch syndrome etc.), exposure (tobacco, sun, radiation, pesticides etc.) Aging with associated DNA instability and damage besides other known and unknown causes.

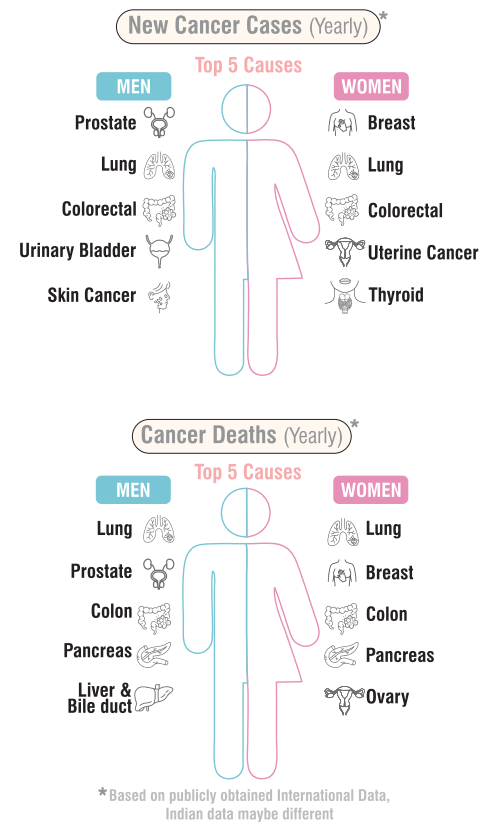
Cancer maybe caused, sometimes by a big one time exposure (Hiroshima, Chernobyl nuclear disaster etc.) or sometimes cumulative low dose exposure, tiny DNA repair defects accumulated over many years or sometimes without any apparent causation.

Cancer can involve almost every organ and the top 5 causes in men and women by incidence and mortality are given in the image on the right.

Not every cancer is the same, some cancers like Acute Lymphoid Leukemia, Lymphoma in children or Breast, Prostate cancer particularly in early stages have a good prognosis and cure with early detection and treatment. Some other cancers like small cell cancer of lungs has a poor prognosis despite the best treatment available to date.

A lot of research is being done into the causes of various types of cancer and also advances and treatments, particularly Targeted therapy including Monoclonal antibodies, Immunotherapy, Genetical therapy besides Chemotherapy, Minimally invasive and Robotic surgeries, and Targeted radiation therapies, knowledge and treatment options being updated on a month by month and yearly basis.

But despite all the advances trying to prevent cancers from occurring in the first place by avoiding known triggers like smoking, maintaining a healthy active lifestyle, following age appropriate screening guidelines and vaccinations where appropriate.



Did you know?

Cervical cancer in women is now considered preventable (with HPV vaccine & good hygiene)

Cancer Screening: Detecting Cancer Early Can Save Lives

Cancer screening refers to tests that look for early signs of cancer before symptoms appear. These tests help doctors detect cancers or precancerous changes in the body, allowing for early treatment or prevention.

General Screening Guidelines

- **Age:** The risk of cancer increases with age. Most adults over 40 years should begin routine screenings, as recommended by their healthcare provider
- **Risk Factors:** Your personal and family medical history, along with lifestyle factors like smoking, alcohol use, diet, and physical activity, can influence your screening needs
- **Early Detection:** Many cancers can be treated successfully when found early. Screening can detect abnormal or precancerous cells, which can often be removed before cancer develops

COMMON CANCER SCREENINGS AT A GLANCE

CANCER	SCREENING TEST	WHO & WHEN
Breast	Mammogram / MRI	Women 40+ (MRI for high risk)
Cervical	Pap Smear / HPV Test	Women 21–65
Colorectal	Stool test / Colonoscopy	Adults 45+
Lung	Low-Dose CT Scan	50–80, heavy smokers
Prostate	PSA blood test / DRE	Men 50+ (45+ with family history)
Oral	Oral visual exam	Adults, especially tobacco users
Ovarian	Pelvic exam / Ultrasound	High-risk women
Endometrial	Pelvic exam / Biopsy	Post-menopause or symptomatic

Prevention Is Power: Small Changes, Big Difference

Cancer continues to be one of the biggest health challenges in India and around the world. But there's good news nearly half of all cancers can be prevented through healthy lifestyle choices. While we can't change our genes, we can control many of the factors that raise our risk. Prevention begins with awareness and small, consistent steps toward healthier living.

- Quit Tobacco in All Forms
- Eat a Balanced, Colorful Diet; Avoid Processed Food
- Maintain a Healthy Weight and Stay Active
- Limit Alcohol Consumption
- Protect Yourself from the Sun
- Get Vaccinated
- Go for Regular Screenings
- Manage Stress and Sleep Well
- Minimize Exposure to Pollution and Chemicals



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