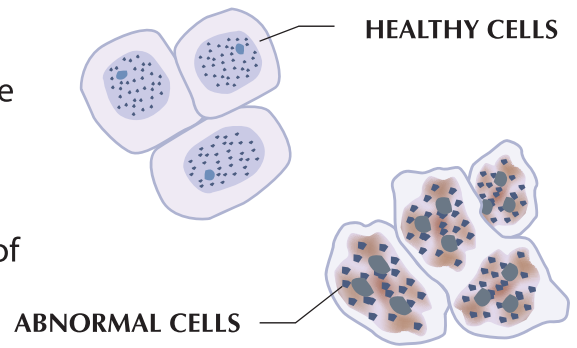


Understanding Cancer

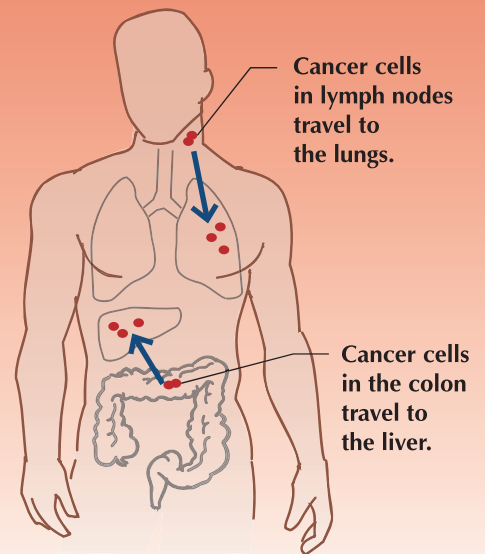
Cancer occurs when healthy cells live beyond their normal life cycle, do not die, and continue to grow out of control. As these abnormal (malignant) cells multiply, they destroy normal healthy cells. Most cancers are named after the type of cell or organ in which they begin.



How Cancer Spreads

Cancer cells may metastasize (spread) to other parts of the body, where they continue to multiply. There are three ways in which cancer cells may spread.

1. Cancer cells may travel through the bloodstream to other organs, often the liver or the lungs
2. Cancer cells may travel through the lymphatic system. This complex network of cells and channels runs throughout the body and defends against disease and infection. Cancer cells may move from the tissues to the lymph nodes and eventually to other organs
3. Cancer cells may travel from their initial site to a nearby organ and spread throughout that area



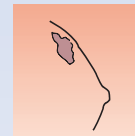
What Are the Common Signs and Symptoms?

It is important that cancer is detected as early as possible, before it begins to spread. Signs are observations made by a health-care professional; symptoms are subtle changes in the body that only a patient can notice or feel.

- Unexplained weight loss, fever, or fatigue
- Constant pain
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- A change in bowel or bladder habits
- Skin changes, such as a mole changing color or size, or a sore that does not heal



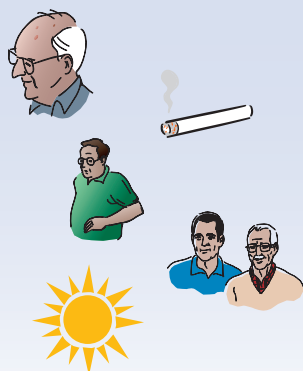
- A lump or thickening in the breast or elsewhere in the body
- Constant cough or hoarseness
- Difficulty swallowing or indigestion



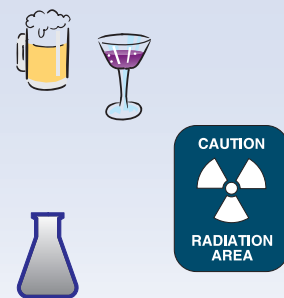
Understanding Cancer (cont'd)

Risk Factors

- Age
- Smoking
- Unhealthy diet
- Overweight
- Family history
- Exposure to sun

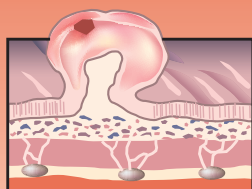


- Heavy alcohol consumption
- High levels of estrogen
- Exposure to chemicals and/or radiation
- Certain viruses



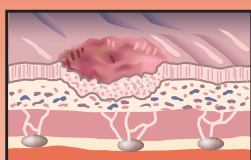
Understanding the Staging of Cancer

Stage I



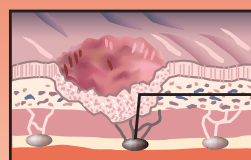
Cancer is confined and has not spread to neighboring tissue

Stage II



Cancer has spread beyond the original (primary) site, but there is no lymph node involvement

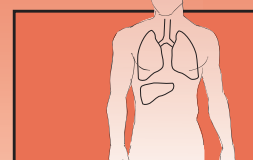
Stage III



Cancer has spread beyond the original (primary) site to nearby lymph nodes but not to other parts of the body

LYMPH NODE

Stage IV



Cancer has spread to distant organs

Treatment Options

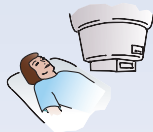
Each type of cancer is treated differently and there are many treatment options available. Your doctor will decide the most effective course of treatment for you.

Common treatment options:

- **Surgery** - to remove the cancer and the diseased tissue



- **Radiation therapy** - a treatment that uses high-energy x-rays to kill cancer cells



- **Chemotherapy** - the use of anticancer drugs to destroy or prevent further growth of cancer cells



- **Biological therapy (immunotherapy)** - uses the body's natural immune system to fight cancer



- **Clinical trials** - studies to evaluate new treatments before they are available to the public. Ask your doctor if a clinical trial is appropriate for you

