

From Awareness to Action

Cancer symptoms you can't ignore

Does fear of a cancer diagnosis keep you from seeing the doctor, even when you know in your heart you should? If so, you are not alone. Most unexplained symptoms that could indicate cancer are usually NOT cancer, but rather, a less serious condition. However, seeing your doctor promptly can avert a lot of uncertainty and stress. Despite a cancer diagnosis, many people are living long, healthy lives due to advances in cancer treatment.

Cancer is not one disease, but a whole group of diseases that can cause a range of symptoms. Some symptoms are vague, such as fatigue. Others, such as a lump in the breast or prostate, are more obvious. The key is to be informed about potential signs of cancer, to recognize what's normal for you, and to see your doctor right away if something changes.

The top three most common signs of cancer are:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Blood in the stool
- Skin changes, including sores that do not heal, new or changed moles, warts, or freckles

Other common signs of cancer include:

- Abnormal lump below the skin, most often in the breast, testicles, lymph nodes, and soft tissue
- Changes in bathroom habits, including diarrhea or constipation, frequent urination or pain with urination
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Pain, such as persistent headache or back pain
- White spots in the mouth
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Indigestion or trouble swallowing
- Nagging cough or hoarseness

Remember, these signs do not necessarily mean you have cancer. The sooner you see your doctor, the sooner you can put your mind at ease. And, if you do in fact have cancer, early diagnosis and treatment usually means a good prognosis.

ACTION ITEMS

- 🎗 See your primary care physician right away when you notice any new or suspicious symptoms. If you experience sudden problems, such as heavy bleeding or severe headache, go to the emergency room.
- 🎗 Talk to your doctor about how to reduce your risk for developing cancer. Up to one-half of cancers are attributable to preventable causes, such as smoking, being obese, or not using sun protection.

SEVEN WARNING SIGNALS OF CANCER YOU CAN'T IGNORE

- 1 A change in bowel or bladder habits



- 2 A sore that does not heal



- 3 Unusual bleeding or discharge



- 4 Thickening or a lump in the breast or elsewhere



- 5 Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing



- 6 Obvious change in wart or mole



- 7 Nagging cough or hoarseness



ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT AGE- AND RISK-APPROPRIATE CANCER SCREENINGS

Screening for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer saves lives. Cancer screening detects pre-cancerous changes, or cancer at an early stage when there is a better chance of treating it successfully. Screening is for individuals who do not have any cancer symptoms.

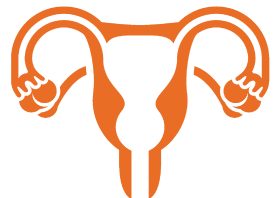
BREAST ►

Regular breast cancer screening can find cancer when it is small and thus, there is a better chance of treating it successfully.



CERVICAL ►

Cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable with regular screening, appropriate and timely follow-up of abnormal Pap test results, and HPV immunization.



COLORECTAL ►

When colorectal cancer is caught early through screening, a person with colorectal cancer has a 90% chance of being cured.

