

Early detection, early detection, early detection



The three important things to know about cancers

Three important things to know about cancer: early detection, early detection, early detection.

Why say it three times? Because if you have to choose only one thing to remember from this cancer awareness campaign, it's this: *early detection can save your life*.

Before we go on, we want to reinforce that changes in your lifestyle can reduce your chances of even developing colon, skin, and breast cancer. But even if you follow all of these lifestyle suggestions, regular screening for colon, skin, and breast cancer is vital.

Here are some uplifting statistics. They demonstrate how incredibly important early detection is to your chances for successful treatment:

- The five-year relative survival rate for women with stage 0 or stage I breast cancer is close to 100 percent.¹
- When colon cancer is found early, before it has spread, the five-year relative survival rate is 90 percent.²
- The five-year survival rate for people whose melanoma is detected and treated before it spreads to the lymph nodes is 99 percent.³

In other words, you have enormous power to fight cancer. Let's look at the common fears and misconceptions. We'd like to help you shed some of that fear and recognize the power you have over cancer.



- Does even the word “cancer” make you uncomfortable?
- If someone starts to talk about cancer, would you prefer to change the subject?
- If there was a chance you had cancer, would you want to know?
- If your healthcare provider wanted you to take a test for cancer, would you take it?
- Do you avoid tests for cancer because you’ve heard terrible things about the tests?
- Do you avoid tests for cancer because you’ve heard or think they’re embarrassing?
- Are you afraid that a diagnosis of cancer—or even discussing cancer — could jeopardize your job? Or change the way co-workers treat you?
- Do you avoid tests because you don’t want to take time off from work?

If you have any of these fears or worries, remember this: cancer loves your fear. If you ignore cancer, it can grow and spread. Once it spreads, treatment options become limited. The chances for your recovery may be greatly reduced.

Try this exercise: take every worry above and reframe it into something proactive and powerful. For example:

- *“I want to know more about cancer. It’s not catching me by surprise and destroying my life!”*
- *“I’m afraid of tests, but I’ll find out more about them. Going through months of cancer treatment is a lot worse than one uncomfortable screening test.”*

1. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/understanding-a-breast-cancer-diagnosis/breast-cancer-survival-rates.html>, January 2020
2. <https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/signs-and-symptoms-of-colon-cancer.html>, February 2020
3. <https://www.aad.org/media/stats/conditions/skin-cancer>, accessed on October 1, 2020

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