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Monthly Newsletter
Special Focus: HEALTH -
Cancer Ailment

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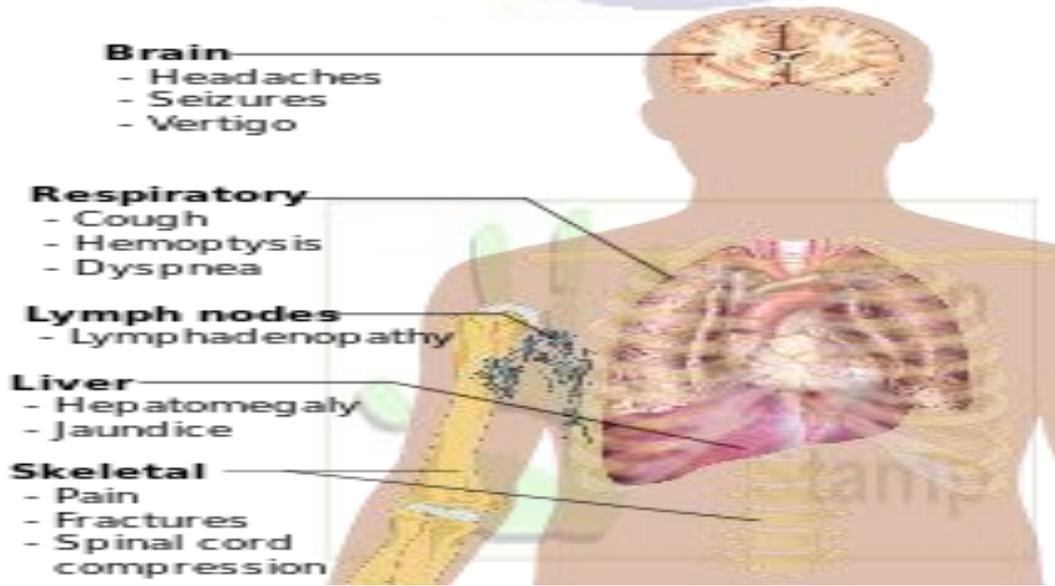
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Cancer

Signs and symptoms

Main article: [Cancer signs and symptoms](#)

Common sites and symptoms of Cancer metastasis



Cancer ^{/'kænsər/}, known medically as a [malignant neoplasm](#), is a broad group of diseases involving unregulated cell growth. In cancer, [cells](#) divide and grow uncontrollably, forming malignant tumors, and invading nearby parts of the body. The cancer may also [spread](#) to more distant parts of the body through the [lymphatic system](#) or [bloodstream](#). Not all tumors are cancerous; [benign tumors](#) do not invade neighboring tissues and do not spread throughout the body. There are over 200 different known cancers that affect humans.

The causes of cancer are diverse, complex, and only partially understood. Many things are known to increase the risk of cancer, including [tobacco](#) use, [dietary](#) factors, certain [infections](#), exposure to [radiation](#), [lack of physical activity](#), [obesity](#), and environmental pollutants. These factors can directly damage genes or combine with existing genetic faults within cells to cause cancerous mutations. Approximately 5–10% of cancers can be traced directly to inherited genetic defects. Many cancers

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could be prevented by not smoking, eating more vegetables, fruits and whole grains, eating less meat and refined carbohydrates, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, minimizing sunlight exposure, and being [vaccinated](#) against some infectious diseases.

Cancer can be detected in a number of ways, including the presence of certain [signs and symptoms](#), [screening tests](#), or [medical imaging](#). Once a possible cancer is detected it is diagnosed by [microscopic examination](#) of a [tissue sample](#). Cancer is usually treated with [chemotherapy](#), [radiation therapy](#) and [surgery](#). The chances of surviving the disease vary greatly by the type and location of the cancer and the extent of disease at the start of treatment. While cancer can affect people of all ages, and a few types of cancer are more common in children, the risk of developing cancer generally increases with age. In 2007, cancer caused about 13% of [all human deaths](#) worldwide (7.9 million). Rates are rising as more people live to an old age and as mass lifestyle changes occur in the developing world.

Definitions

There is no one definition that describes all cancers. They are a large family of diseases which form a subset of [neoplasms](#), which show some features that suggest of [malignancy](#). A neoplasm or tumor is a group of cells that have undergone unregulated growth, and will often form a mass or lump, but may be distributed diffusely.

Six characteristics of malignancies have been proposed: sustaining proliferative signaling, evading growth suppressors, resisting cell death, enabling replicative immortality, inducing angiogenesis, and activating invasion and metastasis. The progression from normal cells to cells that can form a discernible mass to outright cancer involves multiple steps.

Symptoms of cancer [metastasis](#) depend on the location of the tumor.

When cancer begins it invariably produces no symptoms with signs and symptoms only appearing as the mass continues to grow or [ulcerates](#). The findings that result depend on the type and

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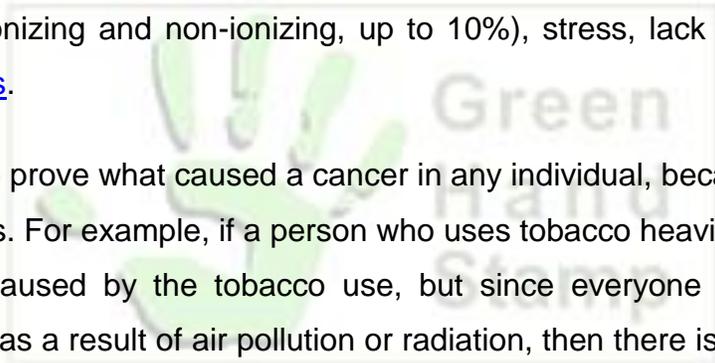
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location of the cancer. Few symptoms are specific, with many of them also frequently occurring in individuals who have other conditions. Cancer is the new "great imitator". Thus it is not uncommon for people diagnosed with cancer to have been treated for other diseases to which it was assumed their symptoms were due.



Causes

Cancers are primarily an environmental disease with 90–95% of cases attributed to environmental factors and 5–10% due to genetics. Environmental, as used by cancer researchers, means any cause that is not inherited genetically, not merely pollution. Common environmental factors that contribute to cancer death include tobacco (25–30%), diet and obesity (30–35%), infections (15–20%), radiation (both ionizing and non-ionizing, up to 10%), stress, lack of physical activity, and environmental pollutants.



It is nearly impossible to prove what caused a cancer in any individual, because most cancers have multiple possible causes. For example, if a person who uses tobacco heavily develops lung cancer, then it was probably caused by the tobacco use, but since everyone has a small chance of developing lung cancer as a result of air pollution or radiation, then there is a small chance that the cancer developed because of air pollution or radiation.

Prevention

Cancer prevention is defined as active measures to decrease the risk of cancer. The vast majority of cancer cases are due to environmental risk factors, and many, but not all, of these environmental factors are controllable lifestyle choices. Thus, cancer is considered a largely preventable disease. Greater than 30% of cancer deaths could be prevented by avoiding risk factors including: tobacco, overweight / obesity, an insufficient diet, physical inactivity, alcohol, sexually transmitted infections, and air pollution. Not all environmental causes are controllable, such as naturally occurring background radiation, and other cases of cancer are caused through hereditary genetic disorders, and thus it is not possible to prevent all cases of cancer.

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