



University of Arizona
Cancer Center

Cancer: What You Need to Know

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Cancer

Your own cell which has gone dysfunctional and decide to multiply and increase in number. This cell has potential to harm you because:

- Spread – Metastasize
- Volume – Mass and press on neighboring organs
- Sticky – Make you clot
- Nutrition – Eat up energy and also make you feel not hungry
- Secrete hormones – It may release substances causing symptoms

Cancer is not transmittable.

Cancer is Not One Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based on

- Site of origin – Prostate, bladder, stomach, etc.
- Genetic make up – Tumors from different sites may have similar genetic problem
- Human Variation – Since all humans are different (except twins) tumor arising in every human is different from other with same type of cancer

Diagnosis

1. Imaging for a symptom or incidental
2. Biopsy
 - a) Fine needle aspiration
 - b) Core biopsy
 - c) surgery

Staging

I – Localized to the site of origin

II – Local spread within the site of origin

III – Extensive spread within the site of origin

IV – Spread outside to other parts beyond the site of origin

Treatment

Either alone or combination

- Surgery
- Radiation
- Chemotherapy/Immunotherapy/Targeted drugs

Treatment and Prognosis

Your choice of treatment and prognosis is based on

- Stage
- Performance status
- Genetic make up of tumor

Outcome of Treatment

- Cure – Stage I, II and III
- Remission – Stage IV
- Recurrence
- Progression/treatment failure

Questions To Ask Your Provider

Surgeon

- Do you specialize in oncologic procedures
- How many similar procedures you have done in last 12 months
- What is the complication rate
- How many patients die during or after surgery
- Can you talk to someone who had gone through the same procedure

Questions To Ask Your Provider

Medical Oncologist

- Do you specialize in my type of cancer if not then how many similar cases you had seen in last one year
- What is the basis for deciding my treatment – anecdotal, clinical trial
- What are other options including clinical trials available for my disease
- Treatment specific questions



University of Arizona Cancer Center

Mission Statement:

We exist to make a difference in people's lives
through excellent patient care.

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