



ICSSS

Indian Community Senior Support Services

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From The President's Desk

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Hearing the dreadful news that you or your loved one is diagnosed to have "Cancer" is scary and devastating; even today some cancers are considered as a "Death Sentence". Cancer is the second leading killer in the USA, accounting for 25% of all deaths. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in males, followed by lung and colorectal. For women breast cancer is the most common, followed by lung and colorectal. However, it should be noted that lung cancer is the number one cancer killer for both men and women.

It is helpful to learn all about cancer. To start with we need to note that:

- Sometimes the diagnosis of Cancer is **missed or delayed**, sometimes it is **misdiagnosed** mimicking other benign medical conditions.

- Next we need to understand the **etiology** of cancer. As to how cancer cells are formed. In spite of significant research going on and billions of dollars are spent we do not have all the answers.

- Next and the most important is "How to **prevent** Cancer".

- **Early detection** is a key for good outcomes.

- **Newer** different modalities in the treatment which includes surgery, chemotherapy, immunotherapy and

radiation therapy should be explored.

ETIOLOGY: Cancer is caused by damage to our DNA, the chemical instructions that tell our cells what to do. Things in our environment, such as UV rays, or our lifestyle, such as the cancer-causing chemicals in tobacco, can damage our DNA. This damage builds up over time. If a cell develops too much damage to its DNA it can start to multiply out of control – this is how cancer starts.

Elevated levels of serum insulin impact on the liver primarily, increasing the production of insulin-like growth factor I (IGF-I) while reducing the production of insulin-like growth factor binding protein 1 (IGFBP-1) resulting in stimulation of tumor cell growth and inhibition of apoptosis (programmed cell death).

Many people believe that getting cancer is purely down to genes, fate or bad luck. But through scientific research, we know that our risk actually depends on a combination of our genes, our environment and aspects of our lives, many of which we can control.

CANCER RISKS: Avoiding certain risk

factors and behaviors may help decrease your risk for developing cancer.

- v Avoid cigarette and cigar smoking.
- v Avoid over exposure to sun.
- v Eat a balanced diet low in fat and high in fiber.
- v Exercise regularly.
- v Avoid excessive alcohol.
- v Maintain a healthy weight.
- v Avoid exposure to toxic chemicals

PREVENTION OF CANCER:

It took all of us to accept that Cancers can be prevented. Preventing cancer doesn't work in the same way as preventing infectious diseases with vaccines. Anyone can get cancer. However, only about 5 to 10 percent of all cancers develop from gene mutations passed down from one generation to

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the next, according to the American Cancer Society. For the other 90 to 95 percent of cancers, the lifestyle choices you make, the foods you eat and the amount of exercise you incorporate into your daily life can have an important impact on your overall risk. So being aware of lifestyle and diet choices are helpful tools for preventing cancer. (Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention, July) 'Healthy living' is not a cast-iron guarantee against cancer. But it stacks the odds in your favor, by reducing the risk of developing the disease.

But experts estimate that more than 4 in 10 cancer cases could be prevented by lifestyle changes, such as:

These ten recommendations for cancer prevention are as follow:

1. Be as lean as possible without becoming underweight.
2. Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day. Limit sedentary habits.
3. Avoid sugary drinks. Limit consumption of energy-dense foods.
4. Eat more of a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes such as beans.
5. Limit consumption of red meats (such as beef, pork and lamb) and avoid processed meats.
6. If consumed at all, limit alco-

holic drinks to 2 for men and 1 for women a day.

7. Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium).
8. Don't use supplements to protect against cancer.

Early detection of cancer:

Early detection of cancer and prompt treatment greatly improves the outcomes and in some situations actually cures cancer. In order to detect cancers in early stages you need to know the early symptoms/signs. Some of the symptoms/signs mimic benign conditions and may be ignored. There are two major components of early detection of cancer: education to promote early diagnosis and screening.

American Cancer Society has published a survey of seven warning signs for cancer as follows, please complete this survey. If your answer Yes even to a single question it is wise to see a Physician.

- Y N Have you experienced a change in bowel or bladder function?
- Y N Do you have sore(s) that will not heal?
- Y N Do you have any unusual bleeding or discharge?
- Y N Do you have thickening or lump(s) in your breast or elsewhere?
- Y N Do you have any indigestion or difficulty in swallowing?
- Y N Have you noticed any obvious change in a wart or mole?
- Y N Do you have any nagging cough or hoarseness?



Cancer Screening: During screening patient actually do not have symptoms and do not have obvious signs. Cancer is diagnosed in early stage and thus the prognosis is much better. Screening guidelines are different for different cancers

Following are some screening tests that have been shown to Reduce Cancer Deaths

- **Colonoscopy** has become a gold standard for screening for colon cancer. Colonoscopy also help prevent colorectal cancer because they can detect abnormal colon growths (polyps) that can be removed before they develop into cancer. The data showed consistent reduction in the incidence of colon cancer by 27 to 52 percent. Expert groups generally recommend that people who are at average risk for colorectal cancer have screening at ages 50 through 75.
- **Low-dose helical computed tomography**
This test to screen for lung cancer has been shown to reduce lung cancer deaths among heavy smokers ages 55 to 74.
- **Mammography**
This method to screen for breast cancer has been shown to reduce

mortality from the disease among women ages 40 to 74, especially those age 50 or older.

Pap test and human papillomavirus (HPV) testing

These tests reduce the incidence of cervical cancer because they allow abnormal cells to be identified and treated before they become cancer. They also reduce deaths from cervical cancer. Testing is generally recommended to begin at age 21 and to end at age 65, as

long as recent results have been normal.

PSA Test (Prostate Specific Antigen) for Prostate Cancer.

This blood test, which is often done along with a digital rectal exam, is able to detect prostate cancer at an early stage. However, expert groups no longer recommend routine PSA testing for most men because studies have shown that it has little or no effect on prostate cancer deaths and leads to over diagnosis and overtreatment.

TREATMENTS FOR CANCERS:

Each cancer is treated differently. Besides main treatment which is usually surgery, there are several different adjuvant treatments like chemotherapy, immunotherapy and radiation therapy are available. In this field constant research is being done to come up with the most effective drug.

STIGMA: some people still have stigma about their cancer diagnosis. They are even ashamed to tell their doctors.

Heed these walking safety tips

It's hard to think of a safer form of exercise than walking. But no activity comes without risk. Follow these tips so that each step you take is a healthy—and safe—one:

■ **Clear it with your doctor.** Most people who are generally healthy can start a moderate-intensity walking program without the need for a physical. However, it's important to check with your doctor if you have joint pain or a chronic health problem, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, heart disease, or type 2 diabetes.

■ **Immediately stop walking if you experience unusual symptoms.** If symptoms like dizziness, chest discomfort, or a severe headache don't subside, seek immediate medical attention.

■ **Choose the right footwear.** To avoid falling, wear lightweight walking shoes with low heels and nonslip soles. Wear comfortable shoes that fit well to prevent blisters and knee pain. Look for a solid, rigid sole. Turn the shoe upside down and try to bend it in half. You should be able to bend the shoe slightly, but too much flexibility may not give you enough support. If you suffer from back, knee, or heel pain, choose a shoe with extra heel cushioning. And softer, wider shoes can help ease pain from bunions or corns. Leave a half-inch (about the width of your index finger) between the tip of the shoe and the end of your longest toe. Get fitted at the end of the day, when your feet are most likely to be naturally swollen and larger.

■ **Replace your athletic shoes regularly.** Whatever shock-absorbing effects they may provide will diminish with wear. The American Society of Podiatric Sports Medicine suggests trading your sneakers for new ones after 300 to 500 miles of walking. And, even if you haven't covered that mileage, you should replace your

shoes every year because, depending on the type of environment you store them in, some of the shoes' materials can dry out.

■ **Try to avoid cotton socks, which retain moisture.** Acrylic socks are preferable. Consider cushioned athletic socks that will wick away sweat.

■ **Wear bright or light-colored clothing.** If you walk at dawn or dusk, carry a flashlight and wear reflective garments or tape.

■ **Plan your route.** In some neighborhoods, you can easily find calm streets with sidewalks and low speed limits. But in others you may want to scout ahead, looking for ways to connect one pleasant path with another. Choose a path where businesses are open, lighting is good, and emergency telephones are available.

■ **Obey traffic regulations.** Walk facing oncoming traffic if you're not on a sidewalk. Use crosswalks when they're available.

■ **Don't be distracted.** Although listening to music or a podcast or talking on the phone can help the time pass, these activities can divert your attention from an oncoming car, a ditch, or a signpost in your path. If you have to use headphones during a walk, keep the volume low enough to hear your surroundings. Between 2004 and 2010, the number of pedestrian accidents related to phone use tripled, according to an August 2013 study in *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. And consider this: According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, women ages 55 and older are most likely to suffer a serious injury during a distracted-walking incident.

■ **Be aware of your surroundings.** Keep an eye out for curbs and rough patches or uneven surfaces on your path. And don't just look for obstacles in front of you; watch out for other pedestrians—especially the ones talking on their phones.