

Perspective

Cancer Diagnosis

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INTRODUCTION

Cancer screening

The best chance for a cure is to diagnose cancer at its early stages. With this in mind, discuss your options for cancer screening with your doctor. Studies demonstrate that screening tests can save lives by detecting cancer early in a select cancer. Screening tests for various malignancies are only suggested for persons who are at a higher risk. Cancer screening recommendations and guidelines are available from a number of medical organizations and patient advocacy organizations. Examine the various standards with your doctor, and you and he may decide what's best for you based on your own cancer risk factors.

Cancer diagnosis

Imaging test: Noninvasive imaging examinations allow your doctor to inspect your bones and internal organs. A Computed Tomography (CT) scan, bone scan, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan, ultrasound, and X-ray are some of the imaging techniques used to diagnose cancer.

Physical examination: Your doctor may feel for bumps on your body that could signal cancer. During a physical examination, your doctor may search for abnormalities that could suggest the presence of cancer, such as changes in skin colour or organ enlargement.

Biopsy: During a biopsy, your doctor takes a sample of cells for laboratory testing. A sample can be collected in a variety of ways. The sort of cancer you have and where it is located determine which biopsy procedure is best for you. In most cases, a biopsy is the only option to confirm a cancer diagnosis.

Laboratory analysis: Laboratory testing, such as urine and blood tests, may aid your doctor in detecting cancer-related abnormalities. A standard blood test called a complete blood count, for example, may detect an unusual quantity or kind of white blood cells in persons with leukaemia.

Cancer stages

Your doctor will seek to identify the extent (stage) of your cancer once it has been diagnosed. Your doctor will use the stage of your cancer to assess your treatment options and prospects of a cure. Imaging tests, such as bone scans or X-rays, may be used as part of the staging process to check if the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. The numbers 0 through 4, which are typically written as Roman numerals 0 through IV, are used to indicate cancer stages. Higher figures imply that the cancer has progressed. The cancer stage is marked by letters or phrases in several types of cancer.

TREATMENT AND ITS OBJECTIVES

There are numerous cancer treatments available. The type and stage of your cancer, as well as your overall health and preferences, will all influence your treatment options. You and your doctor can decide which cancer treatment is best for you by weighing the benefits and dangers of each option. The treatment of the cancer has different objectives viz.

Cure: The goal of treatment is to cure your cancer and restore your ability to live a normal life. Depending on your unique situation, this may or may not be doable.

Palliative treatment: Palliative therapy can help with treatment side effects as well as cancer-related signs and symptoms. When a cure isn't possible, surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and hormone treatment can all be used to relieve symptoms and slow the spread of cancer. Pain and shortness of breath may be relieved by medications.

Primary treatment: A main treatment's purpose is to eradicate the cancer from your body or to kill the cancer cells. Any cancer treatment can be utilised as a first line of defence, however surgery is the most common first line of defence for the most prevalent cancers. You may receive one of these therapies as your primary treatment if your cancer is very sensitive to radiation therapy or chemotherapy.

Treatment

Immunotherapy: Immunotherapy, often known as biological therapy, is a cancer treatment that makes use of your body's immune system. Because your immune system does not detect cancer as an intruder, it can thrive unchecked in your body. Immunotherapy can assist your immune system in "seeing" and attacking cancer.

Hormonal Therapy: Some cancers are driven by hormones in the body. Breast cancer and prostate cancer are two examples. Cancer cells may stop developing if such hormones are removed from the body or their effects are blocked.

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Bone marrow transplant: A stem cell transplant is another name for a bone marrow transplant. The stuff inside your bones that produces blood cells is called bone marrow. Your own cells or cells from a donor can be used in a bone marrow transplant. A bone marrow transplant allows your doctor to treat your cancer with larger chemotherapy doses. It can also be used to replace bone marrow that has become diseased.

Radiation therapy: To kill cancer cells, radiation therapy uses

high-powered energy beams such as X-rays and protons. Radiation therapy can come from a machine outside your body (external beam radiation) or from inside your body (internal beam radiation) (brachytherapy).

There are various other methods like chemotherapy, surgery, targeted drug therapy etc. which are used depending upon the type and stage of cancer.