

Everything you want to know about cancer & its treatment

Dr Kapil Kumar, director, BLK Cancer Centre & HOD, Surgical Oncology, BLK Cancer Centre, BLK Super Speciality Hospital, answers queries about cancer.

What is cancer?

Cancer is an abnormal growth of a body cell or a group of cells. If it isn't destroyed or removed, cancer can spread rapidly, and lead to death. There are billions of cells in the body which grow in a well-regulated pattern. When cancer sets in, the cells suddenly start multiplying haphazardly and form a lump or 'tumour'.

What causes cancer?

Though it is difficult to pinpoint the cause, substances known as carcinogens, can increase your chances of getting cancer. For instance, people who

smoke or chew tobacco are more prone to mouth, throat and lung cancer. Contrary to popular opinion, smoking *beedi* is twice as dangerous as smoking cigarettes. Pollution and consumption of preserved, smoked and junk food are also contributors to cancer. Even certain viruses can cause cancer (EBV, Hepatitis B, HPV). Some of the other causes of cancer are: exposure to asbestos, arsenic, pitch, tar and ultra-violet rays.

What are the early signs of cancer?

There are seven common signs of cancer, called the 'seven danger signals of cancer':

1. Change in bowel or bladder habits
2. A sore that doesn't heal
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge
4. Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere

5. Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
6. Obvious change in wart or mole
7. Nagging cough or hoarseness.

How should cancer be treated?

The emphasis of cancer treatment should be on multimodal management – be it surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy or a combination of all three, at the earliest stage of the disease.

How effective is surgery as a cure?

Surgery is most effective in the early stages when the cancer has not yet spread. Major advances in plastic, reconstructive surgery and anaesthesiology have ensured a high degree of success. More than 80% of cancers are completely curable if treated early. But it can even be cured later depending on



Dr Kapil Kumar

the type of cancer and stage of cancer.
Can you lead a normal life after cancer?

The sooner you opt for treatment, the better the quality of life post cancer. Most cancer patients can return to their normal lives even while undergoing treatment.

Address: BLK Cancer Centre, BLK Super Speciality Hospital

For more information, call: 8800294340

Disclaimer: The views/suggestions/opinions expressed in the article are the sole responsibility of the experts.