

# The Signs of Cancer

## Seven warning signs from the American Cancer Society

- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- A sore that does not heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- Obvious change in wart or mole
- Nagging cough or hoarseness

## Breast Cancer

- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area
- Breast lumps are common and are not necessarily cancerous mobility of lump is important  
malignant lumps are usually fixed
- Breast cancer lumps are usually irregularly shaped and hard
- A change in the size or shape of the breast
- A discharge from the nipple
  - Discharge that is creamy or green is usually benign
  - Bloodstained discharge may be due to cancer
  - A nipple that becomes inverted or retracted may indicate cancer
  - A change in the color or feel of the skin of the breast, areola, or nipple (dimpled, puckered, or scaly)

## Prostate Cancer

- Difficulty in passing cancer
- Frequent urination
- Dribbling of urine before or after urination
- Having a strong urge to urinate but producing a weak flow, and being awakened during the night  
by the need to urinate

## Lung Cancer

- Does not cause symptoms when it first develops
- A “smoker's cough” that becomes worse
- Constant chest pain
- Shortness of breath, wheezing, repeated bouts of pneumonia or bronchitis
- Coughing up blood
- Hoarseness
- Swelling of neck and face caused by tumor pressing on large blood vessels near lung
- Sharp drop in the level of sodium in the blood can cause confusion and even coma

## Colon Cancer

- Passing blood in the stool
  - Rectal bleeding
- Large amounts of mucous with the stool
- A change from the normal bowel habit, such as loose stool or constipation
- Abdominal pain
  - Stomach cramps that don't go away
- Weight loss
- Feeling tired

These symptoms can also be caused by hemorrhoids (blood in stool), infections (diarrhea).

Bleeding from a tumor usually occurs slowly over many months; unaware of the blood loss, it may lead to anemia, resulting in shortness of breath, feeling of tiredness and dizziness

## **Oral Cancer**

- A sore on the lip or in the mouth that does not heal
- A lump on the lip or in the mouth or throat
- A white or red patch on the gums, tongue, or lining of the mouth
- Unusual bleeding, pain, or numbness in the mouth
- A sore throat that does not go away, or a feeling that something is caught in the throat
- Difficulty or pain with chewing or swallowing
- Swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable
- A change in the voice
- Pain in the ear

## **Skin Cancer**

- New growth or sore that doesn't heal
- Not all skin cancers look the same they can be:
  - A small, smooth, shiny, pale, or waxy lump
  - A firm, red lump
  - A lump that bleeds or develops a crust
  - Can start as a flat, red spot that is rough, dry or scaly
- Areas most affected are the head, face, neck, hands, and arms, but can appear anywhere
- Actinic keratosis, a precancerous condition, appears as rough, red or brown scaly patches on the Skin

## **Cervical Cancer**

- Abnormal bleeding
  - May start and stop between regular menstrual periods
  - May occur after sexual intercourse or pelvic exam
  - Bleeding after menopause
- Increased vaginal discharge

## **Ovarian Cancer**

- Hard to find early
- Pelvic or abdominal pain or discomfort, and/or feeling of fullness
- Bloating/swelling in the abdomen/unexplained weight gain you look suddenly pregnant
- Weight loss/appetite loss
- Feeling tired
- Vague but persistent gastrointestinal upsets such as gas, nausea and indigestion
- Backache
- Cramps
- Bladder or other urinary problems (frequency and/or urgency of urination in absence of an infection)
- Unexplained changes in bowel habits
- Hard-feeling ovaries
- Unusual vaginal bleeding
- Pain during intercourse

## **Endometrial Cancer**

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding after menopause
- Difficult or painful urination
- Pain during intercourse
- Pain in the pelvic area

## **Stomach Cancer**

- Indigestion or a burning sensation (heartburn)
- Discomfort or pain in the abdomen
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Bloating of the stomach after meals
- Loss of appetite
- Weakness and fatigue
- Bleeding (vomiting blood or having blood in the stool)