

Life Conservation Service

**John Hancock Mutual Life
Insurance Company**

Boston, Massachusetts

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CANCER

✓ / CANCER / ✓

Early Diagnosis Essential

THE misfortunes which worry us most are, perhaps, those which never happen. The fear of what may be often keeps us from enjoying the present. How many of us, who feel that we may have some symptoms of cancer, fear to consult a doctor. Instead of going at once to find out whether or not our suspicions are groundless, we act as though we enjoy mental discomfort, or as though cancer is something shameful which should be hidden.

The presence of cancer is nothing to be ashamed of. Then why should we delay obtaining mental relief—either the consolation of knowing that cancer is not present, or of knowing that the condition has been recognized in time for helpful treatment? For

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early recognition and prompt treatment of cancer may mean the difference between hope and despair.

The purpose of this booklet is to outline certain symptoms and to answer questions which are frequently asked about cancer, with the hope of aiding in the early recognition and prompt treatment of this disease.

What is Cancer?

THE body is made up of small particles called "cells" which normally work in cooperation with one another. In cancer, some of these cells start growing lawlessly, for some unexplained reason, and continue to grow to the harm of the surrounding tissues. This continual abnormal growing makes a small lump or sore in one spot, gradually increasing in size, which is typical of all cancers. As the growth continues, tiny particles may

be carried to other parts of the body and there start new growths.

Is Cancer Contagious?

IT is believed that contact with a person with cancer does not cause cancer. Recent investigations strengthen the belief that cancer is not spread by living agents, as are communicable diseases; that it is not contagious.

There should be no hesitancy in caring for a person with cancer because of the fear of catching the disease. Nurses and doctors have cared for thousands of cancer patients, yet we can find no record that one of them has caught the disease from the patient.

The Danger Signals of Cancer

ONE reason so many people die from cancer is because the disease usually exists for some time before it is properly treated. By

then it has changed from a small local growth to a large one. Protect yourself against cancer by knowing what the first symptoms are and what to do if these are present. The signals which may show the presence of cancer are:

Any lump, especially in the breast, which persists. There may be no other danger signal, no pain, no feeling of ill health.

Any sore which does not heal, especially about the tongue, mouth, or lips. Perhaps a sore may have started from the rubbing of an ill-fitting plate against the tongue or mouth, or from some other irritation. If such a sore persists and does not heal, it may be cancer.

Any bleeding or unusual discharge from any of the openings of the body.

Persistent indigestion with loss of weight.

These signs do not necessarily mean cancer, but you cannot tell. Go to your doctor and see what he says. If you haven't cancer, the truth will be welcome; if you have cancer, early recognition and treatment may save your life.

Cancer is often fatal merely because people fail to have an early examination, or because they postpone treatment until it is too late.

What to Do

IF any of the danger signals appears, consult your family doctor at once. If he wishes to call another doctor in consultation, you should encourage him to do so.

The doctor may direct you to a hospital or clinic for examination. Because advice and examination are sought at a hospital, it does not necessarily follow that the person must be treated for cancer. The special facilities of a

hospital or clinic are often sought as an additional aid in making a correct diagnosis. Many conditions are non-cancerous; sometimes harmful conditions not related to cancer may be found and advice given as to how these may be helped. In every case, it is worth while to have the examination.

Act at Once

IN cases of cancer, there is one thing which will surely prove dangerous; that is, delay in the discovery and treatment of the disease. If you discovered a small fire in your home, you would not wait until it was all ablaze before calling the fire department. Growths can more easily be removed if they are discovered and treated early, before they have a chance to affect other parts of the body.

Medicines and home remedies will not cure cancer. The safest rule to follow is to do

nothing except under the advice of a competent physician or surgeon.

Cancer can often be cured if taken in time. Don't wait.

The Prevention and Curability of Cancer

CANCER is no respecter of persons. Both rich and poor have cancer. Healthfulness of environment plays no part. The best sanitation does not help. Nevertheless, some cancers may be prevented.

Although little is known as to the cause of cancer, it is agreed that chronic irritation is partly responsible for the disease. But what is chronic irritation? This term has been defined as a form of irritation inside or outside the body which brings about a state of continual inflammation or soreness. The causes of continual irritation should be removed.

While cancer may occur in any part of the body, either inside or outside, some places seem particularly favorable for its development. These are the digestive organs, the genital organs, the breast and the skin.

Cancer of the Digestive Organs

Cancer of the digestive organs is responsible for the largest number of deaths from this disease. Persistent indigestion in a person of over 35 years demands investigation by a skilled physician.

Cancer of the Genital Organs

Cancer of the genital organs is by far the most common cause of death from cancer in women. Formerly regarded as a hopeless form, current practices now have proved that it is one of the more hopeful forms of cancer. Any abnormal discharge or bleeding calls for immediate examination.

Cancer of the Breast

Cancer of the breast has signs which the person attacked may easily notice. The chief one is a persistent and painless lump. The fact that it is painless may lead to the belief that it is harmless. It may be harmless but only a doctor can tell. If the lump is small, the operation to remove it is slight. Many cases of cancer of the breast can be cured, if treated promptly by a competent surgeon.

Cancer of the Skin

There should be practically no deaths from cancer of the skin. The condition develops in plain sight. Most skin cancers should be either prevented or treated so early that they become rather simple affairs. Persistent warts slowly increasing in size or deepening in color should be regarded with suspicion. Pigmented moles existing from birth are an important source of cancer. Only a small

proportion are dangerous, but if they tend to deepen in color and increase in size and become "warty" they should receive the attention of a physician. While skin cancers are not wholly preventable, they are nearly always curable if the patient is observant and if proper treatment is given.

Weapons Against Cancer

THE only weapons against cancer are surgery, x-ray and radium. They not only act as preventives by removing pre-cancerous conditions, but they also act as cures by taking away the cancer itself. Sometimes radium and x-ray are used with surgery as a treatment. They are also used alone to cure or help patients with cancer.

Both radium and x-ray are used to the same end, the destruction of the diseased tissues, but not of the healthy tissues. But these powerful

tools should be used only by persons skilled in their use. You would not trust an inexperienced person to operate on you. Nor should you trust an inexperienced person to give radium or x-ray treatment.

Watch for the danger signals of cancer:

A lump in any part of the body.

An abnormal discharge.

A sore that fails to heal readily.

A wart or mole that increases in size.

A marked loss of weight accompanied by persistent indigestion.

If you suspect cancer, do not delay but go to the doctor at once.

Avoid fake cures.

The time to cure cancer is when it is beginning.

Many cases can be cured if treated promptly.