



THE LIGHT
THAT
NEVER FAILS

facts about

CANCER

T.(i)4562 (5-61) PRINTED IN U.S.A.

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Home Office: New York • Pacific Coast Head Office: San Francisco • Canadian Head Office: Ottawa

FACTS ABOUT CANCER

EARLY CANCER IS OFTEN CURABLE

More than a million Americans are alive today — because by consulting their physician, their cancers were detected in a curable stage and received proper treatment. One out of three cancer patients is now being cured, as compared with one out of four a few short years ago. “Cured” means that a patient has no sign of the disease at least five years after diagnosis and treatment. More and more people now realize how important it is to see their doctor without delay if they notice any of the suspicious signs of cancer.

Almost every branch of modern science is engaged in a relentless research attack on cancer. More and more is being learned about the nature of the disease, and steady progress is being made in detecting, treating, and controlling cancer. The examination of cast-off cells (*exfoliative cytology*) has provided new weapons against some cancers. Important research is going on to discover hazards in the environment — for instance, in the air; in certain chemicals; in rays — which cause some cancers. By removing or controlling these cancer-producing substances (*carcinogens*) many cancers may be prevented. Scientific investigation is focusing on the relationship of viruses and cancer, and this research may also shed new light on cause and prevention. There is every reason to believe that science will provide the exact answers to why cancers start — how they grow — and how to prevent them.

Right now the best line of defense for every adult is to —

1. Have a complete physical examination at least once a year.
2. Learn the early warning signs of cancer.
(See page 5.)
3. Consult your doctor at once if any of them appears.

WHAT CANCER IS

Life begins within a tiny unit called a cell. One cell divides and becomes two cells, which divide again into four, and so on. Along with this cell division goes the *process of differentiation of cells* — that is, cells of differing types develop to form the tissues which make up the individual organs of the body such as the heart, lungs, and stomach. Even after the body is fully grown, new cells continually form to replace old cells, heal injuries, and keep the body in good repair.

For some unknown reason a single cell or group of cells in any organ or part of the body may undergo changes which set it apart from the other cells. These changed cells grow and multiply in an abnormal and disorganized way — apparently uncontrolled by normal body processes that usually govern the growth of new cells. In time, these altered cells form a tumor — a new growth of tissue which serves no useful purpose. A tumor is either benign (mild in character) or malignant (capable of causing death). Cancer is a malignant tumor.

A cancer may grow slowly and stay in one place for a long time, or it may grow rapidly and spread quickly. It spreads in several ways. It may invade surrounding tissues and destroy that part of the body. Or it may spread directly into nearby organs. Cells from the cancer may enter the blood or lymph channels and be scattered throughout the body. This process is called *metastasis*. Wherever these cast-off cells settle, a new cancer of the same type may begin to grow.

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- Why certain body cells become cancerous is not yet known. But some of the conditions and substances (*carcinogens*) which may cause or lead to cancer are known.
 - Cancer is neither inherited nor contagious.

- Cancer occurs in children and in young people, but it is more common in older people.
- Although there is still disagreement as to whether excessive cigarette smoking causes lung cancer, there is increasing statistical evidence that it is an important factor. Pollution of the air by cancer-producing agents is also under investigation as a cause of lung cancer. The intensive research studies that are being conducted on causative factors in lung cancer should eventually provide the answers.
- Repeated sunburn and overexposure to sunlight can cause skin cancer in some people. Fair-skinned people, in particular, should avoid excessive exposure to strong sunlight, and make certain to use a protective cream or lotion.
- Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women. Physicians can give women simple instructions for monthly self-examination of the breasts. The film, "Breast Self-Examination," or the leaflet on this subject are available from the local or State offices of the American Cancer Society.
- Cancer of the uterus is also a common type of cancer in women. Every woman should have a pelvic examination, including a cancer smear ("Pap") test, at least once a year. If cancer of the cervix (entrance of the uterus) is discovered early, it is usually curable by proper treatment. It is important for every mother to have a pelvic examination six weeks after the birth of a baby.
- It is advisable to consult a physician about moles which are in places where they may be irritated.
- Seeing a dentist periodically will enable him to detect conditions in the mouth which might indicate or lead to cancer.

PERCENT LIVING FIVE YEARS AFTER TREATMENT

Location of Cancer	Women		Men	
	When Localized	When Spread	When Localized	When Spread
Skin	78	—	70	—
Uterus	75	41	—	—
Breast	72	42	—	—
Intestines & Rectum	59	30	51	24
Stomach	31	10	30	9

End-Results Evaluation Program, National Cancer Institute, All Registries Combined, White Patients Diagnosed 1950 and After.

WARNING SIGNS

Between yearly checkups it is wise to be alert to signs which may warn of cancer. None of these signs definitely indicates cancer—but they should not be ignored.

Know These 7 Signs — if any one of them lasts longer than two weeks, see your physician immediately.

1. Unusual bleeding or discharge.
2. A lump or thickening in the breast or elsewhere.
3. A sore that does not heal.
4. Change in bowel or bladder habits.
5. Hoarseness or persistent cough.
6. Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing.
7. Change in a wart or mole.

THE RIGHT TREATMENT AT THE RIGHT TIME

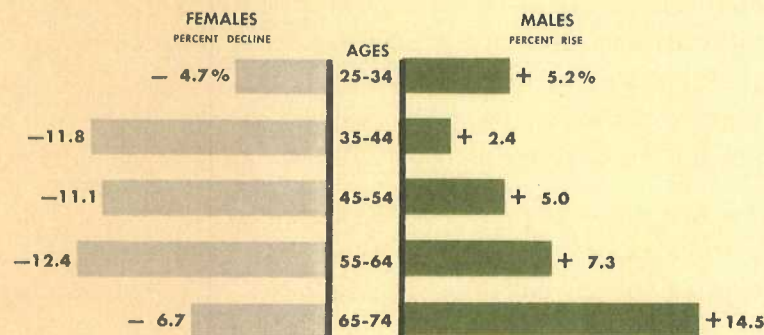
Most cancers begin to grow in one spot — that is, at first they are localized. They often can be removed or destroyed if discovered in this early stage. In fact, it is estimated that if all patients received early and adequate treatment, one half would be cured. But as the cancer continues to grow, it becomes more difficult to control. That is why it is necessary to uproot the disease before it begins to spread.

The first step — going to your physician or to a clinic if you notice a warning sign — is up to you. Although cancer mortality has declined in women, unfortunately it has increased in men. (See chart on page 7.) Every day you put off doing this may cut down your chance of recovery if you do have cancer. And if you do not, you spare yourself needless worry.

In a thorough examination for cancer the physician will look for abnormal conditions — such as a lump in the breast or abdomen, or other part of the body, or an ulcerated sore, particularly in the skin or mouth. He has special instruments which make it possible to examine and see into the body openings. He may decide that special laboratory tests are necessary and he may wish to send the patient to another doctor for consultation.

Choice of treatment depends on the type and location of the cancer and the stage of the disease. So far, the two methods of treatment that have cured cancer are surgery and radiation. By radiation is meant treatment by X-ray, radium, or one of the radioisotopes. Quite often, both surgery and one or more types of radiation are combined in treatment. Another important method of treatment is the use of special drugs or chemicals (*chemotherapy*) which in some cases relieves symptoms and discomfort, retards the progress of the disease, and lengthens life. Intensive research is being concentrated

CHANGES IN DEATH RATE FROM CANCER IN MEN AND WOMEN 1957-58 COMPARED WITH 1947-48 UNITED STATES, WHITE PERSONS



on chemotherapy. The search goes on for drugs and chemicals to halt or slow down cancer, but so far there is no evidence of any "sure-cure" drug.

REMEMBER . . .

- Certain habits and conditions which are thought to lead to cancer can often be avoided or corrected.
- Detection of cancer while still localized and then followed by prompt and proper treatment, greatly increases the chances of cure.
- A thorough medical examination every year is important.

This top-to-toe checkup includes careful examinations of all accessible parts of the body. If early signs of cancer or conditions which are thought to lead to cancer are found, your physician will want you to have further tests.

Your physician is the person to consult about your annual physical checkup. If you are in doubt about whom to consult or you want other information, call the office of your local county medical society, or the local unit of the American Cancer Society.