

about cancer, you—everyone—can help to prevent these unnecessary deaths. Here is what you can do!

Help to prevent it—Keep your skin, mouth, teeth *clean*. Guard against any source of irritation or repeated injury of any part of the body. See your doctor and dentist at regular intervals. Make a point of letting your doctor know about any physical condition that worries or puzzles you.

Help to save yourself if it should develop—Learn the danger signals. If any of them appear, seek medical advice immediately—to get reassurance in case actual cancer is not present—to get the early treatment which holds out the greatest hope of cure in case it is.

3
QUESTIONS
OFTEN ASKED
ABOUT CANCER

Is Cancer Curable?

Yes. Many types of cancer can be cured if discovered early and treated promptly.

Is Cancer Contagious?

No. There is no danger of catching cancer from coming in contact with a person who has one.

Is Cancer Inherited?

No. But it may be that in some families there is lowered resistance on the part of certain tissues or organs to the factors which favor the development of cancer.

*Prepared with the cooperation and advice of the American Cancer Society.
The sword is the symbol of that Society.*

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There
Is
Something
YOU Can Do
About
Cancer

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company

HOME OFFICE: NEW YORK

Pacific Coast Head Office: San Francisco

Canadian Head Office: Ottawa

THERE
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CANCER

How a Cancer Develops

Everything Under Control—There is a law of the body which regulates growth. According to this law a baby keeps on growing until he is grown up, but from then on he stops growing. Growth is brought about by a process called cell division. One cell divides to make two cells; these two new cells divide to make four cells, and so on. When adult life is reached, cell division is checked. Only enough new cells are formed to keep the body in good repair. That is what happens when everything is under control.

Out of Control—In some persons one or more cells in the body—they can be in any part—rebel against the law of growth. Such cells suddenly start to divide in an abnormal and unruly fashion—become outlaws—run wild. After a while they produce a lump of cells which has no useful function. This lump is called a tumor. It may be a *benign tumor*—that is, a growth which is not dangerous unless it presses on nearby organs and interferes with their work. Or it may be a *malignant tumor*—that is, a cancer.

A Cancer Is Dangerous Because it never stops growing. As it grows, it destroys neighboring healthy cells by robbing them of their blood and food supply. After a cancer has grown locally for a while, some of its cells may break off and be carried by the lymph and blood to other parts of the body. Wherever these cells lodge another cancer starts to grow.

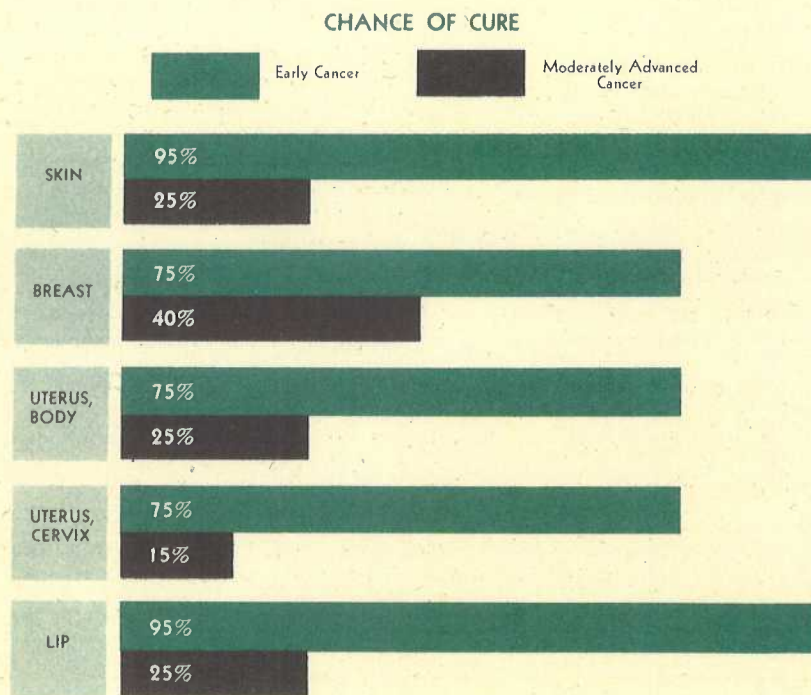
The First Thing You Can Do About
Cancer is to keep in mind the fact
that it is a local disease at the start.



A cancer begins to grow, like a small noxious weed, in one spot. It is comparatively easy to uproot or destroy many types of cancer if discovered in this early local stage.

If a cancer is allowed to keep on growing to a moderately advanced stage, it becomes so deeply rooted that it is difficult to remove completely. *The chance of cure is poor.*

If it is allowed to reach the stage at which it scatters its cells throughout the body, as a mature weed scatters its seeds, *there is almost no chance of cure.*



Percent of cures lasting for at least five years, as compiled by the American Cancer Society.

How a Cancer Is Detected

The individual—maybe you or someone you love—receives the *first* warning signal that may mean cancer. The thing to fear, if it comes, is delay. The thing to do, if it comes, is to see a doctor *without delay*.

So the Second Thing You Can Do About Cancer is to learn and heed the danger signals,

DANGER SIGNALS

Go to Your Doctor Without Delay—

IF you feel a painless lump or thickening, especially in the breast, lip, or tongue.

IF you notice irregular or unexplained nipple or vaginal bleeding or discharge.

IF you have a sore that does not heal—particularly about the tongue, mouth, or lips.

IF you see progressive change in the color or size of a mole, wart, or birthmark.

IF you are bothered with persistent indigestion.

IF you notice any persistent change in normal bowel habits.

IF you observe blood or bloody mucus in the urine or the stools. (There is no evidence that hemorrhoids—piles—may turn into cancer, but their sudden appearance is sometimes the result of a cancer developing higher up in the rectum.)

IF you are troubled with persistent hoarseness, unexplained cough, or difficulty in swallowing.

Cancer is always an emergency. If you receive one of the danger signals, don't wait because you are scared or worried or don't have the time. The signal may not mean cancer, but, if it does, promptness in receiving treatment may save your life.

In the early stages of its growth a cancer is rarely painful. Don't let yourself be fooled by a lack of pain. If cancer is present, to wait for pain is to wait too long.

The doctor is the only one who can find out whether one of the warning signs means that you do or do not have cancer.

In a complete medical examination, with special emphasis on the detection of cancer, the doctor looks for just the things you are warned to watch for, but does it more thoroughly because he has knowledge and skill which you do not possess. For example, with fingers made sensitive through training and experience he feels for evidence of abnormal growths, such as lumps or raised areas, especially in the neck and armpits, the breast, the abdomen, the groin. With the aid of instruments and special lights he looks inside body openings—the mouth and throat, the reproductive organs of women, and, if necessary, the rectum—to note any changes which may indicate beginning cancer. If he finds anything suspicious he takes a specimen for laboratory tests—a small piece of a lump in the breast, for example. As some early cancers are hard to diagnose, he may wish to send the patient to a specialist.

The Third Thing You Can Do About Cancer is to go to your physician at regular intervals (at least once a year) for a complete physical examination, even in the absence of suspicious symptoms, and to see him without delay if any of the danger signals appear between times.

How a Cancer Is Treated

The means of curing cancer are complete removal by surgery or complete destruction by X-rays or radium rays, or by a combination of the two. There is *no other way*—no medicine, no salve, no special diet—known at present.

So, the Fourth Thing You Can Do About Cancer is to beware of quacks.

The “sure cures” they promise—salves, ointments, herbs, medicines, or anything else they may have to sell—are dangerous frauds. Some of these so-called “cures” may actually cause a cancer to grow more rapidly. Remember that your

hope of cure, if you have cancer, is to have it detected early by a doctor—a licensed physician—who relies on the only three proved means of treatment—SURGERY, X-RAYS, and RADIUM.

How a Cancer May Be Prevented

It is not yet known why cancer cells may be produced in one person and not in another person. It *is* known, however, that certain factors influence the development of cancer. Age is a very important factor. Cancer is essentially a disease of middle or old age, although it sometimes develops in children and young adults. As old age approaches, the body tissues begin to break down or wear out, so to speak. They cannot protect themselves so well as they could in youth. Hence they are in a favorable condition for the development of cancer. However, other factors are involved, including, in most cases, long-continued irritations or repeated injury of the tissues. For example:

- ✓ Take a man whose tongue and inner cheek surfaces are continually being irritated by jagged teeth or by dental appliances that do not fit properly.
- ✓ Or a woman with a black or hairy mole on her neck, where it is continually being rubbed by the collar of her dress.
- ✓ Or a man whose digestive tract is continually being irritated by faulty eating habits.
- ✓ Or a woman who has neglected to have childbirth injuries repaired.
- ✓ Or a man with dry, scaly patches about the neck or face which are continually scraped raw by shaving.
- ✓ Or a worker who does not use the means provided to protect his skin from prolonged exposure to certain known cancer-producing substances, such as coal tars, lubricating oils, paraffin, and arsenic.
- ✓ Or anyone with a sore on the lips or in the mouth or anywhere on the skin which fails to heal properly.

These are examples of what the doctors mean when they speak of precancerous conditions. They may not develop into cancer, but then again they may.

The Fifth Thing You Can Do About Cancer is to guard against such conditions or to have them corrected or removed.



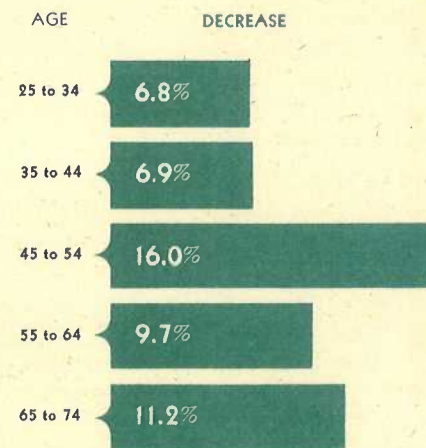
A Message of Hope

There are definite indications from a number of sources that the cancer death rate is beginning to come under control. In Metropolitan Life Insurance Company experience, for example, cancer deaths among women Industrial policyholders have dropped about 12 percent from 1934 to 1944. Even among men policyholders the situation has shown slight improvement in recent years.

A number of reasons may be given to account for this gleam of hope. Doctors now have greatly improved methods of diagnosis and treatment. The people themselves, and particularly the women, are becoming more alert to the early danger signals, and are consulting their doctors when any suspicious signs are observed. There is a growing feeling that cancer is, after all, just a disease—not a disgrace, not the result of “bad blood,” not incurable in most cases if detected and treated in time.

Medical science has, in the past, conquered many seemingly hopeless diseases. It is working hard to conquer cancer. In the process, it has learned a great deal about what can be done to prevent it and to give doctors their very best chance to cure it.

The American Cancer Society estimates that at least one third of the 170,000 persons who die of cancer in the United States each year die unnecessarily. By doing the things you can *now* do



Decreases in the death rate from Cancer, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Industrial Department, white females, 1934 to 1944.