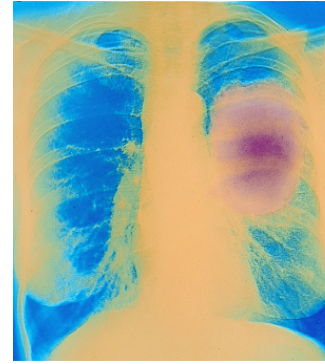


Cancer

Under normal conditions, the body produces new cells at about the same rate that other cells die. In a condition known as cancer, however, the situation is quite different. **Cancer is a disease in which cells multiply uncontrollably, over and over, destroying healthy tissue in the process.**



Dept. of Clinical Radiology, Salisbury District
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How Cancer Develops

As cells divide over and over, they often form abnormal tissue masses called **tumors**. Not all tumors are cancerous. Cancerous tumors invade and destroy the healthy tissue around them. Cancer cells can break away from a tumor and invade blood or lymph vessels. The blood or lymph carries the cancer cells to other parts of the body, where they may begin to divide and form new tumors. Unless stopped by treatment, cancer progresses through the body.

Causes of Cancer

Different factors may work together in causing cells to become cancerous. One such factor is the characteristics that people inherit from their parents. Because of their inherited characteristics, some people are more likely than others to develop certain kinds of cancer. For example, if you are female, and your mother or grandmother has breast cancer, you have an increased chance of developing breast cancer.

Some substances or factors in the environment, called **carcinogens** (kahr sin uh junz), can cause cancer. The tar in cigarette smoke is an example of a carcinogen. Ultraviolet light, which is part of sunlight, can also be a carcinogen.

Cancer Treatment

Surgery, drugs, and radiation are all used to treat cancer. If cancer is detected before it has spread, doctors may remove the cancerous tumors through surgery. After surgery, radiation or drugs may be used to make sure all the cancer cells have been killed.

Radiation treatment uses high-energy waves to kill cancer cells. When these rays are aimed at tumors, the intense energy damages and kills cancer cells more than it damages normal cells. Drug therapy is the use of chemicals to destroy cancer cells. Many of these chemicals, however, destroy some normal cells as well.

Cancer Prevention

As with other diseases, the best way to fight cancer is to prevent it. People can reduce their risk of cancer by avoiding carcinogens, such as those found in tobacco. Even chewing tobacco and snuff contain carcinogens, which can cause mouth cancers. A low-fat diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables can help prevent cancers of the digestive system.

People can also increase their chance of surviving cancer by having regular medical checkups. The earlier cancer is detected, the more likely it can be treated successfully.

Taken from p. 614 Prentice Hall Chapter 18, Section 4

Cancer

14. What is cancer?

15. As cancerous cells divide over and over, they form abnormal tissue masses called _____.

16. What are two causes of cancer?

a. _____

b. _____

17. Is the following sentence true or false? Surgery, drugs, and radiation are all used to treat cancer. _____

18. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about preventing cancer.

a. Avoid tobacco.

b. Expose your skin to sunlight frequently.

c. Eat plenty of fatty foods.

d. Visit the doctor regularly for medical checkups.