

UniversityHealthServices

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CANCER'S WARNING SIGNALS

Cancer, the second most common cause of death in the US (after heart disease), affects every age group from newborns to the elderly. The best way to combat this deadly disease is to detect it at an early stage. If the detection is prompt, then the probability that cancer can be cured (by surgical removal, radiation, chemotherapy, or hormonal therapy) is much higher. The warning signals of cancer include:

- Unusual bleeding or discharge from the mouth, rectum, bladder, or vagina
- A lump in the breast, armpit, groin, lip, tongue, or neck
- A sore that does not heal, particularly on the lips, tongue, ears, eyelids, or genital organs
- A change in bowel or bladder habits
- Hoarseness or persistent cough
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- Any change in the size or color of a wart or mole

Regular checkups are helpful in detecting early signals of cancer. If you are between the ages of 20 and 40, you should have a cancer-related checkup every 3 years. Those in the age bracket who are at higher risk for certain cancers (because of family medical histories, age, life styles, or types of jobs) should be tested more frequently.

For women, cancer-related checkups include:

- annual pap smear
- monthly self-exam
- annual clinical breast exam

A baseline mammogram (done every 3 years for women over 35 and every year for women over 50). For men over 40, cancer-related checkups include a prostate exam. Young men between the ages of 15 and 35, should perform monthly testicular self-examinations. All adults over 50 should have an annual proctoscopic examination testing for cancer of the colon or rectum.

The American Cancer Society makes 2 other recommendations to further reduce your risk of cancer:

- follow guidelines that recommend reducing the fat intake and increase consumption of foods high in complex carbohydrates
- stop smoking

For additional information, call HealthWorks at (814) 863-2500, or stop by room 19/ 20 Ritenour Building. Or call the local unit of the American Cancer Society located at 123 South Sparks Street, or call (814) 238-8908.

Students at campuses other than University Park should check their phone directory for the number of their local American Cancer Society.

Test Results and Advice Nurse

Please call the nurse for test results and advice: 863-4463

Appointments

Appointments can be made in person or by phone. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call and cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

To schedule or cancel appointments, call: 863-0774

For more information about health care issues, visit the UHS Web site at www.sa.psu.edu/uhs

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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