



## What is cancer?

- There are more than 100 different types of cancer. Cancer begins when cells in our body grow out of control.
- Most cancers are named for the organ in which they start. Cancer that starts in the breast is breast cancer.

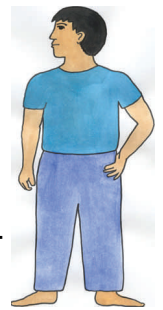
## Why is cancer a concern for American Indian people?



American Indians have fewer cancers than Anglo Americans, African Americans and Hispanic Americans

BUT

It is the second leading cause of death for American Indians. American Indians have the lowest 5 year survival rates in the U.S.

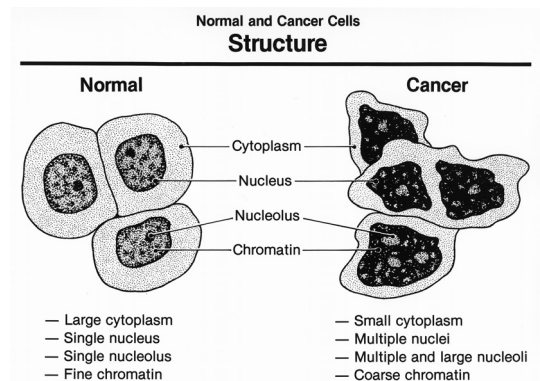


## What causes cancer?

Our body is made of cells. These cells group together to form tissue and organs such as breast, cervix, colon, lung, prostate and skin. These cells grow and divide to produce more cells as needed to keep the body healthy.

Sometimes the genetic material (DNA) of a cell can become damaged or changed producing mutations that affect normal cell growth and division. When this happens cells do not die when they should. New cells form when the body does not need them. The extra cells form a mass called a tumor. There are two types:

- Benign: are not cancer and do not spread.
- Malignant: are cancer and can spread through the blood and lymph system.



## What can you do to prevent cancer?

- Do not use commercial tobacco products such as cigarettes and chew.
  - Tobacco is associated with lung and oral cancers.
- Eat foods with less fat
- Eat more vegetables and fruit and whole grains.
- Exercise to maintain a healthy weight
  - Obesity is associated with colon, breast, and other cancers.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol.
  - Alcohol is associated with oral, breast and other cancers.
- Avoid excessive sun exposure, use sunscreen and wear protective clothing.
  - Excessive sun exposure is associated with skin cancer.
- Avoid workplace chemical and mineral exposure
  - Certain chemical and minerals like asbestos and uranium is associated with lung cancer.

## What are the signs/symptoms of cancer?

Cancer can cause a variety of symptoms. Possible signs include the following:

- Lumps on any part of the body
- New moles or changes in the appearance of moles.
- Cough that does not go away.
- Changes in bowel or bladder habits.
- Weight loss
- Unusual bleeding or discharge.

If you have these symptoms, it is very important to see your health care provider.

## How can cancer be detected?

- Cancer screening exams are used to detect cancer in people without sign of symptoms. The American Cancer Society has guidelines for specific cancers.
- Positive results on cancer screening tests require further diagnostic tests.
- Diagnosis of cancer is done by biopsy. The tissue is removed from the body and examined for cancer cells.

## How is cancer treated?

- Treatment is based on the type of cancer involved, where it is located, if the cancer has spread and the general welfare of the patient.
- Cancer treatment can include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy and biological therapy.



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