



“Lighting the way with better patient care.”

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Home Health • Hospice • Palliative • Home Care

HOSPICE PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CANCER

What is Cancer?

Cancer is a group of diseases characterized by the uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells. These cells can invade and destroy healthy tissues and organs, potentially forming masses of tissue known as tumors. Cancer can occur in virtually any part of the body and may be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous). Malignant tumors have the potential to metastasize, spreading to other parts of the body.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Cancer?

The signs and symptoms of cancer can vary widely depending on the type, location, and stage of the disease. Some general signs may include:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue and weakness
- Persistent pain
- Changes in the skin, such as yellowing or darkening
- Changes in bowel or bladder habits
- Persistent cough or difficulty swallowing
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising
- Lumps or thickening of the skin
- Changes in moles or skin growths

What potential factors can cause Cancer?

Cancer can result from a complex interplay of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. Some potential factors include:

- Genetic mutations
- Exposure to carcinogens, such as tobacco smoke, UV radiation, and certain chemicals
- Chronic inflammation
- Immune system dysfunction
- Hormonal factors
- Dietary and lifestyle choices, such as poor nutrition and lack of physical activity
- Age and family history

What can be done for the person with Cancer?

The approach to cancer care is highly individualized, and treatment plans vary based on the type and stage of cancer. However, there are general strategies to support individuals facing a cancer diagnosis:

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- Consult with a multidisciplinary healthcare team, including oncologists, surgeons, and support services.
- Explore treatment options, which may include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, or targeted therapies.
- Manage symptoms and side effects of treatment through supportive care services, such as pain management and nutritional support.
- Seek emotional support through counseling, support groups, and interactions with loved ones.
- Participate in survivorship programs that focus on overall well-being during and after treatment.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, and stress management.
- Consider palliative care and hospice services for individuals with advanced or terminal cancer.

Open communication with the healthcare team, adherence to treatment plans, and the involvement of support networks are essential components of cancer care. Additionally, engaging with cancer-specific organizations can provide valuable resources and community connections for individuals and their families facing this challenging journey.