

On-Line Resources

www.cancer.org (American Cancer Society)

www.cancer.gov (National Cancer Institute)

www.lifewithcancer.org (Inova Health System's cancer education and support program)

www.asco.org (American Society of Clinical Oncology)

www.nih.org (National Institutes of Health)

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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.



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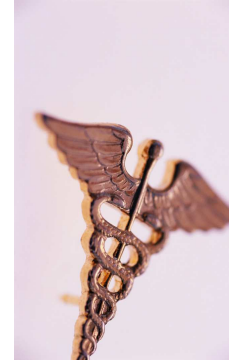
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For Your Health

Cancer Control: Early Detection and Prevention are Key

April is National Cancer Control Month, usually declared by the President of the United States near the end of March as a resolution set by Congress in 1938. It's a month for educating the American public about cancer and the research advances made in the treatment of cancer and for raising awareness about early detection and prevention.

In the United States, cancer remains the second leading cause of death. One out of two men and one out of three women will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. Three out of four families will be affected by a cancer diagnosis. Progress is being made though, as the 5-year survival rate for all cancers has improved with 10 million survivors today compared to 3 million 30 years ago. The key to controlling and fighting cancer is education and focusing on ways cancer can be prevented.

Cancer 101

Cancer is an umbrella term for about 100 diseases. It is characterized by uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells throughout the body. Cancer is caused by both external and internal factors. External factors consist of environmental and lifestyle factors such as tobacco use, diet and physical activity. Internal factors consist of one's own genetics, hormones and immune conditions. Ten years may pass between the time of exposure and detectable cancer.

Be Aware: Know the Signs

Early detection is essential for improved survival. You can take an active role by being aware of your own body and paying close attention to unusual changes. The seven warning signs of cancer are the following:

- ♥ Change in bowel and bladder habits
- ♥ Sore that does not heal
- ♥ Unusual bleeding or discharge
- ♥ Thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere
- ♥ Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- ♥ Change in a mole or wart
- ♥ Nagging cough or hoarseness.

What Can I Do?

Cancer prevention involves reducing the risks that can lead to the development of cancer. This can be done by the following:

- ♥ practicing healthy eating habits
- ♥ exercising regularly
- ♥ limiting sun exposure
- ♥ avoiding tobacco use
- ♥ knowing your family history
- ♥ getting annual cancer screenings



A Moment for Reflection

Cancer Control Month is not just about educating the public about early detection and prevention but about remembering those who have lost their lives to cancer and are fighting the disease. The courage, determination and strength of cancer survivors or thrivers are to be commended as are those who care for and support those with cancer: family members and friends, health care professionals and researchers. Take a moment of silence as you read. Claim the resources of the spirit for yourself or another:

courage,
 strength,
 hope,
 love,
 humor.

