



Cancer

Cancer, also known as Malignant Neoplasms, is a condition that is characterized by the uncontrollable increase of abnormal cells which causes the damage of tissues and organs. One of the primary causes of cancer is exposure to carcinogens. These carcinogens are physical, chemical, or viral materials that turn cells into unhealthy mutations. The mutations result to harmful growth of abnormal cells. The sudden increase in number of cells in a body causes depletion of body nutrients, increase in energy loss, abnormal metabolism, and changes in sensory ability.

Among the early symptoms of cancer are sudden lumps or thickenings under the skin, severe fatigue and muscle pains, accompanied by abnormal bladder movements, and unexplained fevers.

In the Philippines, it is the third cause of mortality. According to the Department of Health, the usual cases of cancer are breast cancer, lung cancer, liver cancer, cervical cancer, and colon cancer. It claims an estimated 50,000 lives of Filipinos yearly.

Also according to the Philippine Children's Medical Center, only 2 out of 10 children will survive cancer because of the lack of available facilities that are spread-out in the country for early detection and unavailability of prescribed medicines. Among the worst cases that hit children are leukemia and brain tumor.

Chemotherapy, the most used treatment for cancer, could cost around P40,000 each treatment, wherein a patient would spend no

less than five treatments at first. Maintenance drugs, doctor's fees, hospital and laboratory fees would add tens of thousands more to a patient's burden.

The government's assistance to cancer patients would involve patients to submit several requirements to prove one is in need of financial help. PhilHealth, the government's flagship insurance program, covers limited types of cancer such as breast cancer and prostate cancer (up to P100,000), and leukemia (up to P200,000 for children), which covers only a small percentage of patients of their choosing. Another source would be to beg from the still existent Medical Assistance Program, a form of pork-barrel by congressmen and senators, which are deposited in certain hospitals only.

Among the researched ways of preventing cancer are: avoiding smoking or exposure to second hand smoke; avoiding high exposure to the sun; avoiding physical and mental stress; maintaining a healthful and balanced diet; maintaining proper weight; regular exercise; and reducing alcohol intake.

Quick Tips: Diet for Cancer Prevention

1. Avoid

a. Excess intake of saturated fats - high fat meat and cheese, pork lard, whole cream and milk, butter, ice cream, mayonnaise, palm and coconut oil

b. High red meat diet - pork and beef

c. Too much alcoholic drinks

d. Daily intake of burned, grilled, barbecued, and smoked meat.

These are sources of pyrobenzene, a cancer promoting compound from burned protein.

2. Increase

a. Green leafy vegetables - ex. alugbati, ampalaya leaves, kangkong, malunggay, pechay, saluyot, spinach

b. Fruits rich in vitamin A and C - ex. dalanghita, dalandan, guava, mango, papaya, santol, suha

c. Fiber rich food - white corn, kamote, brown rice, cassava, whole wheat bread