

Cancer Among American Indians and Alaska Natives



Learning Objectives

At the completion of learning Module 1, you will be able to:

- Give two reasons why cancer is a growing concern in AI/AN communities
- Discuss two facts about how data contributes to our understanding about the cancer health concern for AI/AN



Learning Objectives

- Discuss two facts contributing to poor survival of AI/AN diagnosed with cancer
- Describe two factors likely to improve cancer survival for AI/AN



Cancer Background

- Cancer is a growing health concern among AI/AN due to:
 - Increased life expectancy
 - Lifestyle changes



Data Tell Us

- The incidence of cancer among American Indians is lower than all other ethnic groups including whites in the U.S.



Data Tell Us

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death for American Indians
- The leading cause of death for Alaska Natives



Data Tell Us

- Cancer rates, previously reported as being lower in AI/AN, are on the increase
- Patterns for certain types of cancer vary among AI/AN when compared to whites and other ethnic groups in the U.S.



Limitations of the Data

- Racial misclassification
- Undercounting
- Coding errors
- Not enough numbers to form a conclusion
- Cannot be generalized to Peoples of other areas



Cancer Survival among AI/AN

- AI/AN have the lowest five-year relative survival rate of all U.S. populations.



Cancer Survival among AI/AN

Potential contributing factors:

- Late detection of cancer
- Genetic risk factors
- Poor compliance with recommended treatment



Cancer Survival among AI/AN

Potential contributing factors:

- Presence of other disease conditions
- Lack of timely access to state-of-the-art diagnostic treatment methods



Cancer Survival among AI/AN

Barriers to care:

- Lack of materials and programs that are culturally relevant
- Lack of AI/AN health providers
- Lack of education and training opportunities



Cancer Survival among AI/AN

Barriers to care:

- English as a second language
- Poverty
- Transportation
- Cultural beliefs surrounding cancer



Cancer Survival among AI/AN

Survival can be improved by:

- Increasing participation in regular screening and early detection services
- Reducing barriers to care



In Summary

You now have an understanding of:

- How data affects our understanding of cancer health concerns for AI/AN
- Facts that contribute to poor survival for AI/AN
- Factors that are likely to improve cancer survival for AI/AN



THANK YOU!





What Is Cancer?

Cancer 101
Learning Module 2

Learning Objectives

At the completion of learning Module 2, you will be able to:

- Describe the process through which normal cells become cancerous
- Describe the difference between benign and malignant tumors
- Describe two types of cancer and where they occur in the body

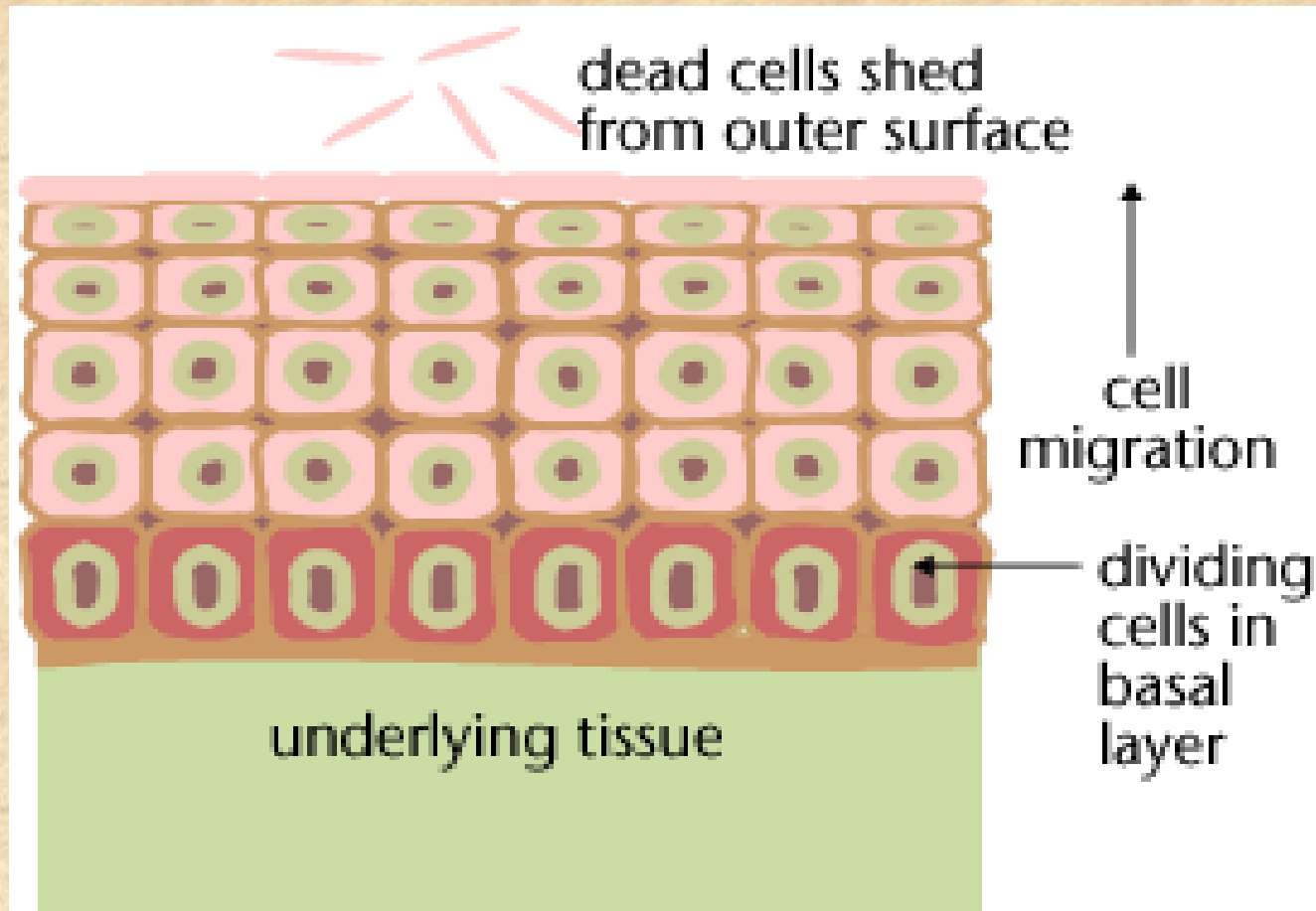


What Is Cancer?

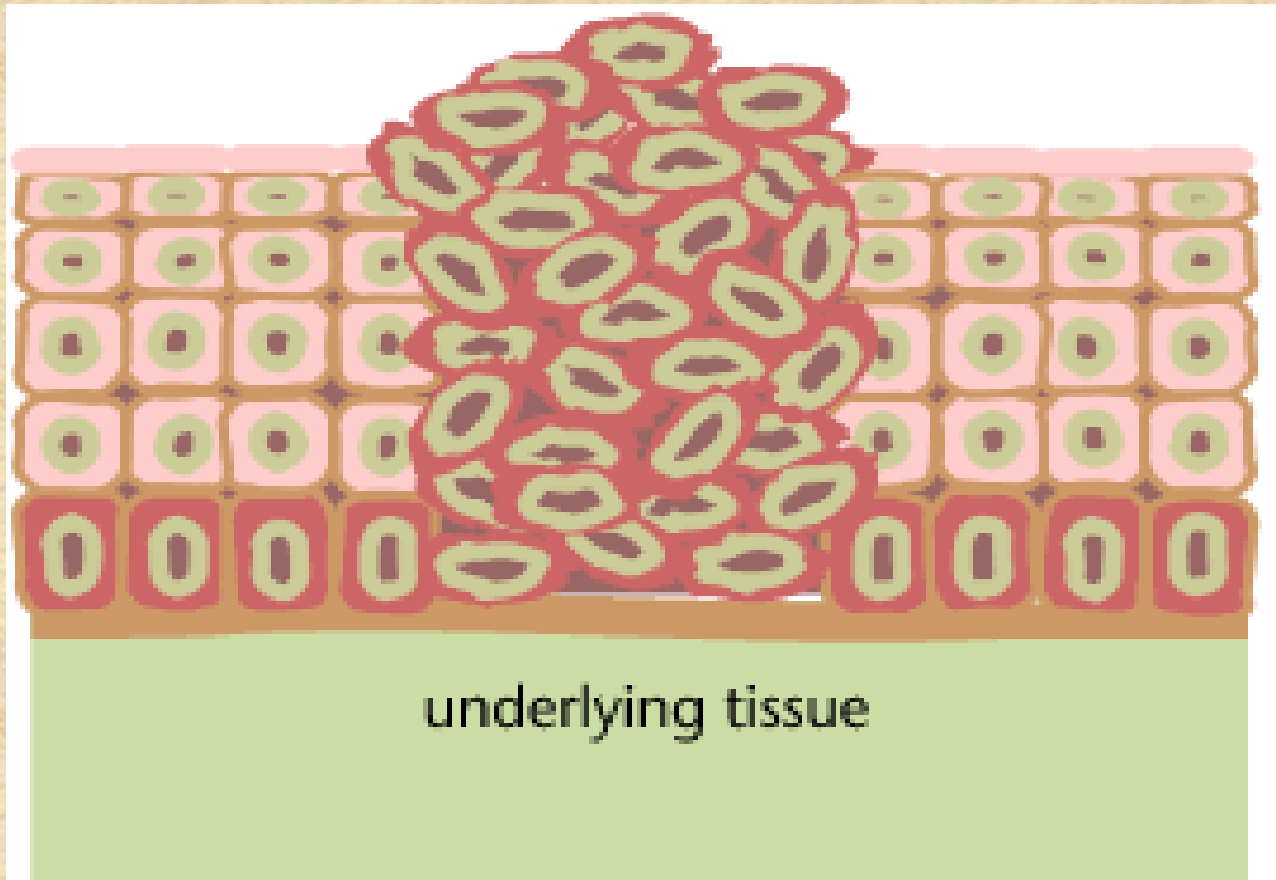
- The term "*cancer*" refers to more than 100 different diseases that begin in the cells, the body's basic unit of life.



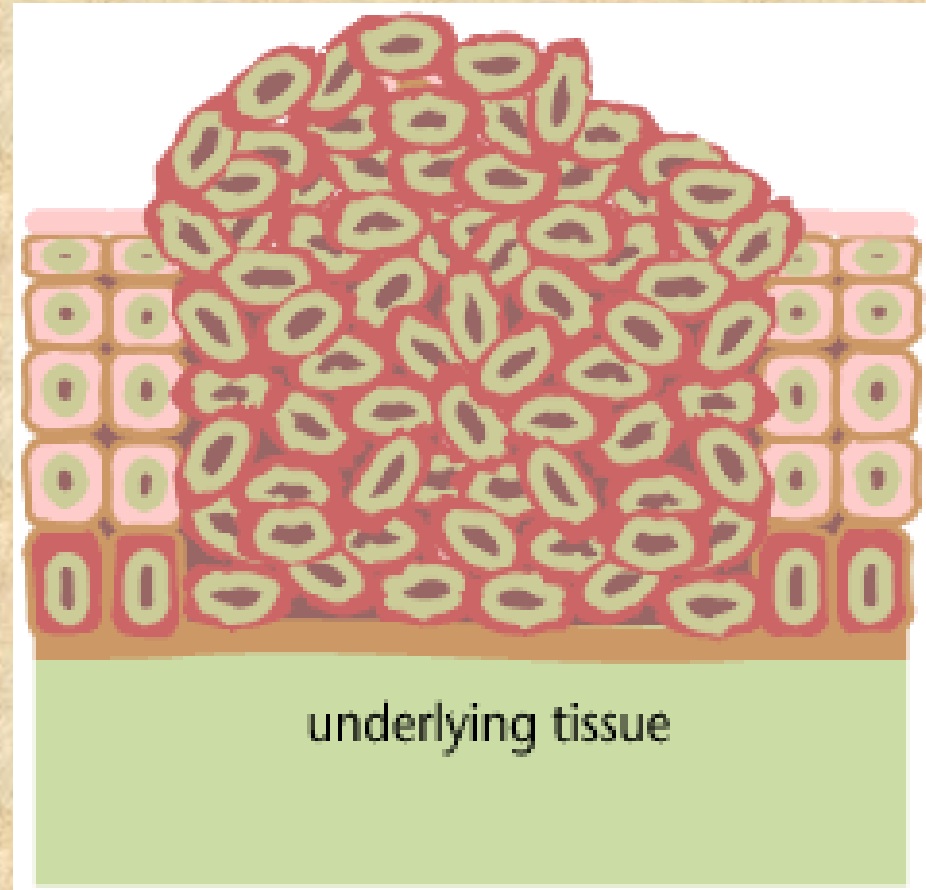
Normal Tissue



Beginning of Cancerous Growth



Cancerous Tumor



What Is Cancer?

- Cancer develops when cells grow and form more cells without order or control.
- Under normal circumstances, new cell growth and old cell death are kept in balance.
- In cancer, this balance is disrupted.



Benign *versus* Malignant Tumors

- Tumors can be either benign or malignant.
- *Benign tumors* are not cancer, do not spread to other parts of the body and are usually not a threat to life.



Benign *versus* Malignant Tumors

- *Malignant tumors* are cancer.
- Cells in malignant tumors can grow without control and invade or damage other parts of the body.
- When cancer (malignant tumor) spreads from the original site to another part of the body it is called *metastasis*.



Types of Cancer

- There are over 100 different types of cancer.
- Treatment decisions are based on knowing the type of cancer involved.



Types of Cancer

Cancers are divided into five main groups:

1. *Carcinomas* are cancers that begin with skin or tissues that line the internal organs.
2. *Sarcomas* are cancers that start in bone, fat, muscle, joint, nerve, blood vessel or deep skin tissues.



Types of Cancer

3. *Lymphomas* are cancers that start in lymph nodes or lymphoid tissues (tissues of the body's immune system).
4. *Leukemias* are cancers of the white blood cells.
5. *Myelomas* are cancers that start in plasma cells found in the bone marrow.



Types of Cancer

- Doctors use different prefixes to help distinguish among the different types of cancer.

For example:

Osteo means bone.

Osteosarcoma means a sarcoma arising in the bone.



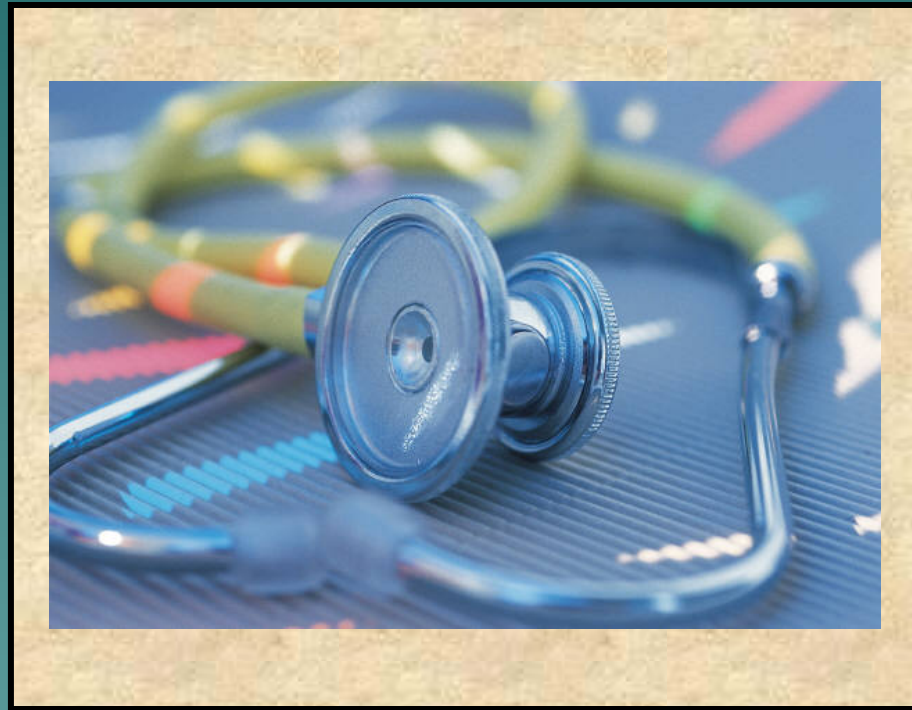
In Summary

You now have an understanding of:

- The meaning of the word cancer
- The difference between benign and malignant tumors
- The process by which cancer spreads
- The different types of cancer

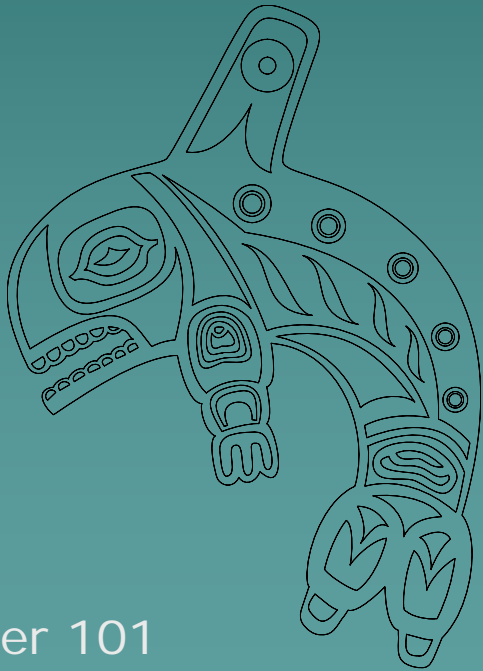


THANK YOU!



Cancer 101
Learning Module 2

Cancer Screening and Early Detection



Cancer 101
Learning Module 3

Learning Objectives

At the completion of learning Module 3, you will be able to:

- Describe the importance of early detection
- Describe two screening methods used in the detection of cancer



Learning Objectives

- Describe two barriers associated with practicing early detection
- Describe three symptoms of cancer



Cancer Screening and Prevention

- The goal of early detection is to discover and stop a cancerous tumor before it grows and spreads (*metastasizes*).



Cancer Screening and Prevention



- Checking for cancer in a person who does not have any symptoms of the disease is called *screening*.



Cancer Screening and Prevention

- Medical screening tests are effective tools of early detection of cancer.
- A few types of cancer have specific tests that aid in detecting cancer.



Cancer Screening and Prevention

Screening tests for common types of cancer:

- Breast - screening mammogram
- Cervix - Pap test
- Colon - fecal occult blood test, colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, digital rectal exam
- Prostate - digital rectal exam



Cancer Screening and Early Detection

- Awareness of body changes may help detect early signs of cancer.
- Examples of changes to note:
 - Breast tissue
 - Testicular tissue



Barriers to Cancer Screening and Early Detection

- There are many barriers that affect one's decision to participate in cancer screening and early detection.



Barriers to Cancer Screening and Early Detection

- Examples of barriers include:
 - Fear of cancer
 - Lack of knowledge
 - Modesty
 - Communication
 - Illness beliefs



Possible Symptoms of Cancer

- There are many different symptoms known to be associated with certain types of cancers.
- A symptom is a sign that something is not right in the body and does NOT always indicate cancer.



Pay Attention to Your Body If There Is. . .

- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- A sore that does not heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Thickening, lump, or swelling in the breast or any other part of the body
- Indigestion or difficulty swallowing
- Recent change in wart or mole
- Nagging cough or hoarseness



Pay Attention to Your Body If There Are . . .

- Unexplained symptoms such as:
 - Progressive weight loss
 - Fever
 - Fatigue
 - Pain



In Summary

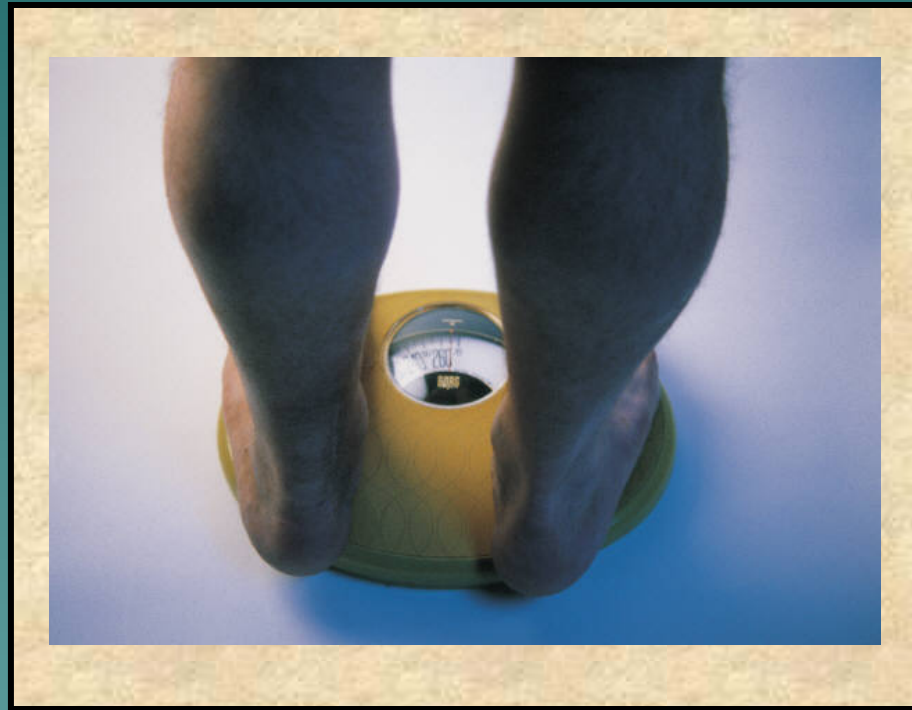
You now have an understanding of :

- The components of early detection
- Importance of recognizing the barriers to practicing early detection
- The symptoms of cancer



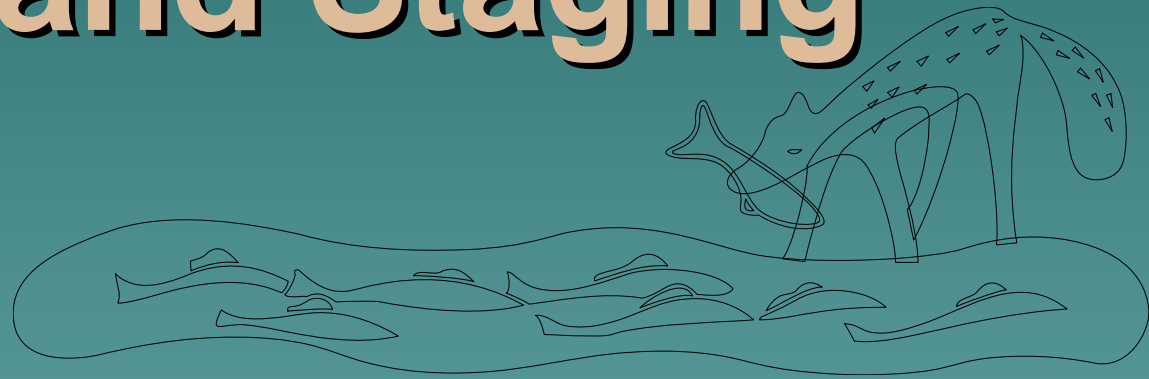


THANK YOU!



Cancer 101
Learning Module 3

Cancer Diagnosis and Staging



Learning Objectives

At the completion of learning
Module 4, you will be able to:

- Describe what is meant by the term biopsy
- Describe how tumors may behave differently from one another



Learning Objectives

- Give two examples of the stages of cancer and their meaning
- Give two reasons why staging is important



Diagnosis of Cancer

- To diagnose the presence of cancer, a doctor must remove a piece of affected tissue (*biopsy*) and look at it under a microscope.



Diagnosis of Cancer

- A *biopsy* is the surgical removal of a small piece of tissue for microscopic examination.



Diagnosis of Cancer

Types of biopsies include:

- Endoscopy
- Needle Biopsy
- Surgical Biopsy



Diagnosis of Cancer

- Microscopic examination of the tissue also helps the doctor determine the “aggressiveness” or the behavior of the cancer.



Diagnosis of Cancer

- *Well differentiated* tumor cells look and function similarly to normal cells of the same type.
- *Poorly differentiated* or undifferentiated tumor cells look abnormal and disorganized.



Diagnosis of Cancer

- Once the cancer diagnosis has been made, more testing may be necessary to determine the *primary site* (where the cancer started).
- The primary site helps determine the type of treatment of the cancer.



Staging of Cancer

- *Staging* is the process that tells the doctor how far the cancer has spread in the body.



Staging of Cancer

The four common stages of cancer are:

- *In situ*: Early cancer that has not spread to neighboring tissues.
- *Local*: Cancer is found only in the organ where it started to grow.



Staging of Cancer

- *Regional*: Cancer has spread to the surrounding tissues or lymph nodes.
- *Distant*: Cancer has spread to other organs and systems of the body.



Staging of Cancer

The *staging* of cancer is important because of the following reasons:

- Determines the extent of disease
- Treatment is determined by stage
- Determines patient's prognosis



In Summary

You now have an understanding of:

- The way in which cancer is diagnosed
- How the extent or stage of cancer is determined



THANK YOU!



Cancer 101
Learning Module 4

Cancer Risk Factors and Risk Reduction



Cancer 101
Learning Module 5

Learning Objectives

At the completion of learning
Module 5, you will be able to:

- Describe the meaning of risk factors
- Describe two risk factors that influence the development of cancer
- Describe two ways to take personal action to reduce cancer risk



What is a risk factor?

- *Risk factors* are conditions that increase the chance that cancer might occur.
- The conditions that influence the development of cancer are related to heredity, lifestyle, and the environment.



What is a risk factor?

- *Heredity*: This refers to genes that are passed from parent to child.
- *Lifestyle*: Some types of cancer are related to how we live.
- *Environment*: Some types of cancer are related to where we work and live.



What is a risk factor?

- Approximately one third of all cancers diagnosed in 2001 were related to nutrition, physical activity and other lifestyle factors.



Risk Reduction

Ways to reduce the cancer burden include:

- Education
- Personal action to reduce cancer risk
- Routine screening for early detection.



Risk Reduction

Personal action to reduce the risk of cancer includes the following:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily.
- Don't smoke



Risk Reduction

- Eat a healthy diet
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Protect yourself from the sun
- Protect yourself and your partner from sexually transmitted diseases



In Summary

You now have an understanding of:

- Cancer risk factors
- How to reduce risks associated with cancer



THANK YOU!





Basics of Cancer Treatment

Cancer 101
Learning Module 6

Learning Objectives

At the completion of learning
Module 6, you will be able to:

- Discuss the Western and traditional approach to cancer treatment
- Discuss the difference between local and systemic treatment for cancer



Learning Objectives

- Describe the reason side effects occur with cancer treatment
- Describe at least two side effects that can occur as a result of cancer treatment



How We Become Well Again

- For many AI/AN diagnosed with cancer, treatment often involves a blend of both *Western* and *traditional medicine*.
- Both methods are necessary to fight against cancer.



How We Become Well Again

Characteristics of the *Western* medical approach to cancer treatment include:

- Science based.
- Focuses on the physical aspect of disease.
- A team of special doctors work together to develop a treatment plan to fit each person's situation.



How We Become Well Again

Characteristics of *traditional medicine* include:

- A traditional healer establishes a long-term relationship with the person and their family.
- Treatment plan focus is on the “whole person”.



How We Become Well Again

- Goal of treatment is centered on restoring harmony and balance.
- AI/AN are most likely to benefit when treatment is focused on a holistic approach that involves a blending of both *Western* and *traditional medicine*.



How We Become Well Again

Treatment for cancer depends on several factors including:

- Type of cancer
- The size, location and stage of the disease
- General health of the individual



How We Become Well Again

The treatment plan may include the following:

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation Therapy
- Hormone Therapy
- Biologic Therapy
- Clinical Trial



How We Become Well Again

Treatment for cancer can be either *local* or *systemic*.

- *Local treatment* affect cancer cells in the tumor and the area near it.
- *Systemic treatment* travels through the bloodstream reaching cancer cells all over the body.



How We Become Well Again

- The *side effects* of cancer treatment result from damage to healthy cells and tissues in addition to the cancer cells.
- *Side effects* depend mainly on the type and extent of the treatment.



Treatment Methods

The following list describes common methods used in the treatment of cancer in *Western* medicine:

- *Surgery*: Removal of the cancerous tumor and possibly the surrounding tissue and lymph nodes near the tumor.



Treatment Methods

- *Chemotherapy*: The use of drugs to kill cancer cells.
- *Biological Therapy (Immunotherapy)*: Helps the body's natural ability (immune system) to fight disease or protects the body from some of the side effects of cancer treatment.



Treatment Methods

- *Radiation Therapy*: The use of high-energy rays to kill cancer cells or stop them from growing and dividing.
- *Hormone Therapy*: Used against certain cancers that depend on hormones for their growth.



Treatment Methods

- *Clinical Trials*: Research studies that evaluate promising new therapies and answer scientific questions.



In Summary

You now have an understanding of:

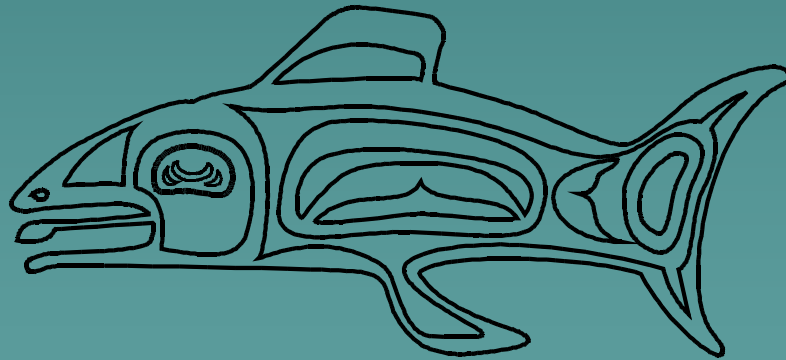
- Common cancer treatments and their potential side effects



THANK YOU!



Support for Patients and Caregivers



Learning Objectives

At the completion of learning Module 7, you will be able to:

- Describe two emotions a cancer patient might experience after diagnosis
- Describe two ways to provide support to a patient facing cancer



Learning Objectives

- Describe two ways that make caregiving less stressful
- Give two examples of how cancer survivors can bring balance back to their lives



Coping with the Cancer Diagnosis - How to be Supportive

Coping with feelings after the diagnosis:

- First few weeks after diagnosis are often the most emotional.
- Feelings may change day to day or even hour to hour.



Coping with the Cancer Diagnosis - How to be Supportive

Coping:

- A person may experience denial, anger, stress, and anxiety.
- Most people are able to move on and look forward to healing.
- Remember! More people are surviving and living long lives after diagnosis.



Coping with the Cancer Diagnosis - How to be Supportive

Tips for helping someone face a cancer diagnosis include:

- Be the friend or loved one you've always been.
- Be there like you always have been.
- Don't be afraid to share feelings.
- Offer to help with child care.



Coping with the Cancer Diagnosis - How to be Supportive

- Offer to give caretakers a break.
- Be available to talk.
- Be comfortable with silence.
- Be hopeful!
- Be positive!



Coping with the Cancer Diagnosis - How to be Supportive

No one needs to face cancer alone!

- Emotional, spiritual, and practical support can be offered by family members, friends, other cancer patients, traditional healers, health providers, and community members.



Coping with the Cancer Diagnosis - How to be Supportive

- Cancer patients who receive support are often better able to cope with their illness.
- Those who give support benefit by being able to do something meaningful.



Coping with the Cancer Diagnosis - How to be Supportive

Suggestions to make caregiving less stressful:

- Offer relief from daily responsibilities.
- Don't try to do everything at once.
- Know your limits.
- Attend support groups.



Life after Cancer Treatment – On the Path to Recovery

- The greatest challenge a person may face in their lifetime is facing a cancer diagnosis and surviving cancer treatment.
- Attaining and maintaining balance is an important part of recovery.



Life after Cancer Treatment – On the Path to Recovery

Suggestions for bringing a sense of *balance* back into life:

- Get back into a routine.
- Return to work.
- Choose activities that have a purpose.
- Spend time with family and friends.



Life after Cancer Treatment – On the Path to Recovery

Balance:

- Get adequate rest.
- Share stories of survival.



In Summary

You now have an understanding of:

- The psychological and social issues affecting cancer patients and their caregivers



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THANK YOU!

