

Name _____ **Cancer**

Stages of Cancer

Cancer occurs when old cells, which normally die, instead grow uncontrollably and form new, abnormal cells. When these unneeded abnormal cells clump together in a mass, it is called a tumor. Cancers can occur anywhere in the body.



When cancer is diagnosed, it is assigned a "stage," which is a numerical scale that describes where a cancer is located, whether or not and where it has spread, and what parts of the body are being affected. The staging process is important because it allows the doctor to create a treatment plan, predict chances for recurrence and recovery, and communicate clearly in a common language that the whole health care team understands. Staging also provides a way to compare how different treatments are working for different people who have the same diagnosis.

Cancer stage grouping is the result of a combination of primary variables which are collectively known as the TNM system. T stands for tumor, and refers to the size and location of the primary tumor. N stands for node, and considers whether or not the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes and to what degree. M stands for metastasis, and considers whether or not and to what degree the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Clinical staging (indicated with a lowercase "c" before the TNM classification) is based on pre-surgery test results. Pathological staging (indicated with a lowercase "p" before the TNM classification) is based on what surgery reveals. Post-therapy (radiation, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, or immunotherapy) is indicated with a lowercase "y" before the TNM classification.

In order to assign a stage to a person's cancer diagnosis, doctors combine the T, N, and M information with other pertinent factors. Most cancers have four recognized cancer stages, with stage 1 being the earliest stage and stage four being the most advanced stage. Some cancers also have a stage 0. Stage 0 cancers can generally be cured with surgery.

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QUESTIONS: Stages of Cancer

Circle the correct answer.

1. Cancer occurs when:
 - A. old cells die
 - B. old cells grow uncontrollably and form new, abnormal cells
 - C. cells clump together in a mass
 - D. none of the above
2. Which of the following does a cancer stage describe?
 - A. where a cancer is located
 - B. whether or not and where cancer has spread
 - C. what parts of the body cancer is affecting
 - D. all of the above
3. Which is NOT a reason why the staging process is important?
 - A. it combines the T, N, and M information with other pertinent factors
 - B. it allows the doctor to create a treatment plan
 - C. it allows doctors to predict chances for recurrence and recovery
 - D. it allows doctors to communicate clearly in a common language that the whole health care team understands
4. Which of the following indicates clinical (pre-surgery) staging?
 - A. TNM
 - B. pTNM
 - C. cTNM
 - D. yTNM
5. Which is the most advanced stage of cancer?
 - A. Stage 1
 - B. Stage 2
 - C. Stage 3
 - D. Stage 4