



The Menen Centre For Optimum Health Oakville and Toronto

An Introduction to Cancer

Cancer has become one of the largest challenges in healthcare today as we move further into the twenty-first century. A wide variety of cancers exist along with many different options for care. Since we are currently working with a large number of patients working through various types of cancers, this newsletter will be the first in a series of articles addressing different types of cancers and will act as a brief introduction to the basics of understanding cancer terminology.

In very general terms, cancer is when a cell in the body begins to reproduce for no apparent reason and does not respond to the body's natural signals to stop. This results in the formation of a mass of cells that can interfere with the functioning of the local tissue. Some cells of this mass or "tumor" can also dislodge and travel to other parts of the body, most commonly through the bloodstream and subsequently may attach to a different tissue and start the uncontrolled cell growth again. This is termed "metastasis."

One of the challenges in dealing with various cancers is the actual diagnosis. Many times cancers go undetected until they start creating obvious symptoms and at this time the cancer may have grown to a size where treatment may be more challenging, or some cells may have metastasized to another area of the body (again creating more of a challenge for treatment). This is why it is so important for people to have regular screening tests and physical exams performed. It is also important to be aware of any changes in one's own body such as: persistent fevers, fatigue, persistent pain, the discovery of any new lumps/bumps, unexplained weight loss or gain, and unexplained bleeding. These are only a few of the symptoms that could be considered warning signs of more serious concerns and should be brought to the attention of a physician so that any necessary diagnostic tests can be ordered.

Treatment options will often vary from one type of cancer to another and can also depend on how advanced the cancer has become. Generally the medical world looks to kill the cancerous cells and halt their reproduction using some combination of surgery, radiation and/or different types of pharmaceutical/chemotherapeutic agents.

Most Common Initial Diagnostic Tests

- Physical Exam (including pelvic, prostate, breast exams)
- Bloodwork
- X-ray
- Stool/Urine Analysis
- Ultrasound
- Mammogram
- Endoscopy

From a Naturopathic perspective, prevention is the best medicine as always. A vast number of studies have linked cancers to the diet, vitamin/mineral deficiencies, lifestyle habits, environmental toxins and mental/emotional states of individuals. Naturopathic Medicine can help to address each of these individual areas from both a preventative perspective and from a treatment perspective. If cancer is already present, Naturopathy can be used on its own or in combination with Western Medical treatments. The key here is to ensure that the proper guidance is received from licensed professionals trained to understand the interactions between various treatment options. The effectiveness of one type of treatment may promote or hinder the effectiveness of another. There can be either benefit or harm in these combinations, so our hope in the next few newsletters is to help guide you or your friends/family in understanding some of the details to help guide individual choices in cancer care.

--Yours in Health, Dr. Jeff Appelman, BSc, ND and Dr. Hanifa Menen, BSc, ND

The Menen Centre For Optimum Health

1166 South Service Road West, Oakville, ON
905-827-7696

738 Spadina Ave, Suite 200, Toronto, ON
416-920-8975

info@menencentre.com www.menencentre.com