

UNDERSTANDING METASTATIC CANCER

Cancer Can Easily Metastasis to Other Parts of the Body Before the Primary Cancer is Detected

Metastasis Is Responsible For 90 % of the Deaths Caused By Cancer

Metastatic cancer is a dangerous and often irreversible stage of cancer. Once a primary cancer spreads to other areas of the body the cancer has metastasized.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of metastatic cancer cause, symptoms and treatment.

01 | Causes

Cancer cells spread through the body in a series of steps. These steps include:

1. Growing into, or invading, nearby normal tissue
2. Moving through the walls of nearby lymph nodes or blood vessels
3. Traveling through the lymphatic system and bloodstream to other parts of the body
4. Stopping in small blood vessels at a distant location, invading the blood vessel walls, and moving into the surrounding tissue
5. Growing in this tissue until a tiny tumor forms
6. Causing new blood vessels to grow, which creates a blood supply that allows the tumor to continue growing

Most of the time, spreading cancer cells die at some point in this process. However, as long as conditions are favorable for the cancer cells at every step, some of them are able to form new tumors in other parts of the body. Metastatic cancer cells can also remain inactive at a distant site for many years before they begin to grow again, if at all.

02 | Symptoms

Metastatic cancer does not always cause symptoms. When symptoms do occur, their nature and frequency will depend on the size and location of the metastatic tumors. Some common signs of metastatic cancer include:

- Pain and fractures, when cancer has spread to the bone
- Headache, seizures, or dizziness, when cancer has spread to the brain

- Shortness of breath, when cancer has spread to the lung
- Jaundice or swelling in the belly, when cancer has spread to the liver

03 | Treatment

Once cancer spreads, it can be hard to control. The goal of these treatments is to stop or slow the growth of the cancer or to relieve symptoms caused by it. In some cases, treatments for metastatic cancer may help prolong life. Treatment for metastatic cancer aims to slow the growth or spread of the cancer. Treatment depends on the type of cancer, where it started, the size and location of the metastasis, and other factors.

Typically, metastatic cancer requires systemic therapy, or medications given by mouth or injected into the bloodstream to reach cancer cells throughout the body, such as chemotherapy or hormone therapy. Other treatments may include biological therapy, radiation therapy, surgery, or a combination of these.

Even if the cancer has stopped responding to treatment, many therapies can ease side effects and improve quality of life. Palliative treatments, which may be the same treatments used to treat cancer, aim to relieve symptoms and side effects.

For more information on metastatic cancer and other oncological conditions, please visit:

<http://www.cancer.gov/>

***Did You Know?
Almost all cancers can
metastasis***

References

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/understandingyourdiagnosis/advancedcancer/advanced-cancer-what-is-metastatic>

<https://www.cancer.gov/types/metastatic-cancer>