

Why it's important to discuss cancer screenings with your doctor

Cancer affects people from all walks of life. The American Cancer Society says that, in 2019, there will be approximately 141,000 cancer cases diagnosed and about 103,000 cancer deaths in the United States. Breast cancer, lung cancer and prostate cancer are some of the most common cancers, although just about any area of the body can be affected by the cell mutations that lead to cancer.

There is no cure for cancer, although billions of dollars are spent each year researching the disease and potential cures. Until a cure has been found, individuals must rely on screenings and prevention methods.

Cancer screening tests are designed to find cancers in their earliest stages, when the disease is most treatable. Many cancer screening tests have been found to lower the death rate from particular cancers, according to the health and wellness resource site MedicineNet.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supports various cancer screening tests as recommended by the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force. The average person should discuss with

their physicians their risk for certain cancers. By considering individual medical history, family health history and/or prior screening results, doctors can develop a screening plan to reduce patients' risk of cancer.

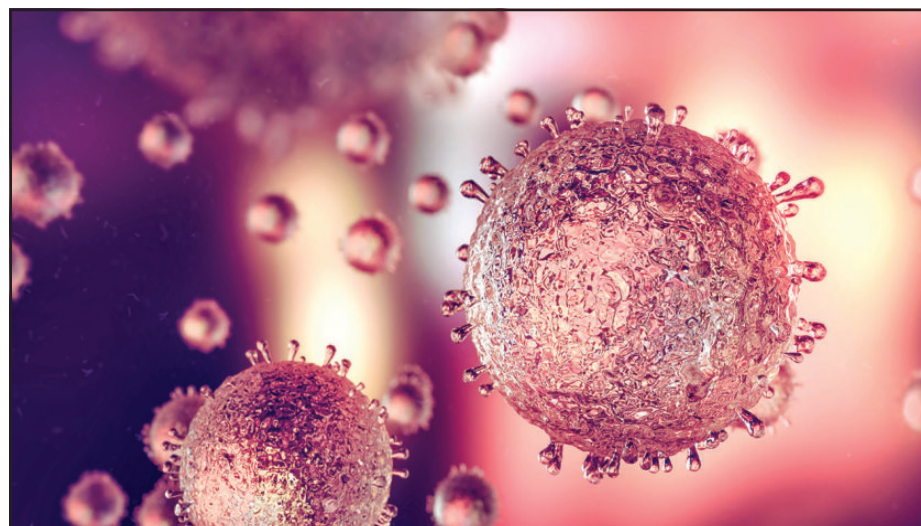
- **Breast cancer:** Mammograms can help find breast abnormalities early on when they are easier to treat and can produce a very good success rate.

- **Colonoscopy / sigmoidoscopy:** These tests help detect colorectal cancer early on and also may help prevent the disease. These tests can find abnormal colon growths that can be removed before they become cancer.

- **Cervical cancer:** A Pap test can find abnormal cells in the cervix that may turn into cancer. Early detection of cervical cancer increases survival rates.

- **Lung cancer:** Yearly lung cancer screening with low-dose computed tomography for those with a history of smoking, particularly heavy smoking, is often recommended.

Prostate cancer testing, including blood tests and a digital rectal exam, used to be the norm. However, Cancer.



org says expert groups no longer recommend routine prostate cancer screenings because many of these cancers are not deadly and early detection has not been shown to reduce the chances of dying from prostate cancer. Some people may still ask to be screened for prostate cancer as well as cancers of the ovaries, pancreas, testicles, and thyroid even though screenings have not been shown to re-

duce deaths from those cancers.

Some cancer screenings are recommended to help catch cancer early and prevent the disease from progressing. People are urged to speak with their doctors about which tests are best for them.

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