

THE BIG C AND HOW EARLY DETECTION HELPS

FEBRUARY 4 IS OBSERVED AS WORLD CANCER DAY ALL OVER THE WORLD. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND TREATMENTS MEAN INCREASING CURED CASES. **BY BINDU GOPAL RAO**

The burden of cancer has doubled over the last decade. According to a Indian Council of Medical Research report, India will register more than 17.3 lakh new cancer cases and more than 8.8 lakh deaths due to the disease by 2020. Cancer is caused by accumulated damage to genes. A number of forces can cause such damage to genes which results in cancer. Certain lifestyle choices such as tobacco and alcohol are known to increase your risk of cancer. Secondhand smoke is also responsible for cancer. The environment around you may contain harmful chemicals that can increase your risk of cancer. So how do you recognize the symptoms and get help?

The main reason for the rising incidence of cancer among people today is their diet. Diet rich in animal protein found in meat, egg, poultry, fish, dairy and processed foods forms top two reasons for the rise in cancer. “Casein forms 87 per cent of milk protein and is the worst protein as it is 100 per cent related to cancer growth. Animal proteins are directly shown to increase cancer cell growth,” says Karan Kakkad, Founder, Reverse Factor. Currently several factors such as breast cancer, cervical cancer, oral cancer and lung cancer constitute for almost 41 per cent of cancer burden

in the country. Oral cancer and lung cancer are the most common types of cancer found among men whereas breast cancer is the major cause of cancer deaths among women. Several factors such as rising tobacco use, increased industrial emission, adulteration and high-risk lifestyle habits like fast food and lack of exercise have led to an increase in the incidence of cancer in India.

Most cancers are genetic in nature and involve mutation of the key genes resulting in uncontrolled cell proliferation and the cancer cell becomes immortal. If you notice any unusual changes or anything that does not go away even after its treatment, check for cancer.

Some of the most common signs and symptoms of the disease include unexplained or sudden weight loss, loss of energy, lumps, yellowing, darkening or redness of skin, pain, indigestion, bleeding, breathlessness and swollen lymph nodes. To detect cancer early, there are some screening tests for certain cancers. “In females self breast examination after age of 20, mammography yearly after age 40 and PAP smear test (for cervical cancer) are

advised. In males who are consuming tobacco products, oral cavity examination and X-ray chest; and for prostate cancer detection, PSA (blood test) are advised,” says Dr. Sanjay Dudhat, Oncologist, Nanavati Super Speciality Hospital.

Cancer can be cured if detected in the early stages. There are three stages of cancer – initiation, promotion and progression. Cancer can be easily reversed when it is in its first two stages by switching to a complete whole plant-based diet. Dr. Sajjan Rajpurohit, Head of Unit, Department of Medical Oncology at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre says, “If the cancer is detected in early stage, the chances of cure are more than 90 per cent. We have certain cancers which can be really diagnosed very early like breast cancer, cervical cancer in women and head and neck cancer and lung cancer and prostate cancer in men. Dr. Sunil Bhat, Director and Clinical Lead, Pediatric Hematology, Oncology and Blood & Marrow Transplantation, Narayana Health Network Hospitals, avers, “If cancer is detected early majority of them can be cured. Treatment traditionally

Actor Manisha Koirala with Bollywood personalities at the recent launch of her book

