

Cancer

Cancer is a disease of the cells in the body. There are many different types of cells in the body, and many different types of cancer which arise from different types of cells.

What is cancer?

Cancer occurs when cells become abnormal and multiply out of control. Different cells in the different parts of the body when multiplied cause different cancers.

Some grow and spread more quickly than others and some are easier to treat than others, particularly if diagnosed at an early stage.

Treatments can vary – some respond to chemotherapy, [radiotherapy](#), or other treatments, while some may need surgery.

Some cancers have a better outlook (prognosis) than others – having a very good chance of being cured. For some types of cancer, the [outlook is much poorer](#) and therefore these have to be managed in a different way.

So, each cancer is different and behaves differently. We cannot put 'cancer' into one box. In each case it is important to know exactly what [type of cancer](#) has developed, how large it has become, whether it has spread and how well the particular type of cancer responds to various treatments. This will enable you to get reliable information on treatment options and outlook.

Further reading

- [Kirkegaard H, Johnsen NF, Christensen J, et al](#); Association of adherence to lifestyle recommendations and risk of colorectal cancer: a prospective Danish cohort study. BMJ. 2010 Oct 26;341:c5504. doi: 10.1136/bmj.c5504.
- [What is Cancer?](#); National Cancer Institute

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Peer reviewed by: Dr Hayley Willacy, FRCGP 11/02/2023	Next review date: 09/01/2028

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