



Alton Memorial Cancer Fair Set For Saturday, October 11

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ALTON, IL -- Half of all men and one-third of all women in the United States will develop cancer during their lifetimes.

Today, millions of people are living with cancer or have had cancer. The risk of developing many types of cancer can be reduced by changes in a person's lifestyle, for example, by staying away from tobacco, limiting time in the sun, being physically active and healthy eating.

Alton Memorial Hospital, an area leader in oncology services, will present its second annual Cancer Fair from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 11, in the hospital's Beeby Wing lobby and cafeteria. A series of health screenings, informational tables, speakers and a free boxed lunch from Subway of Wood River will be available at no charge. To register for the fair and the screenings, call 1-800-392-0936.

Dr. Dani Tazbaz, a pulmonologist on staff at AMH, will speak on the topic of lung cancer at 10 a.m. in the Cafeteria meeting rooms. Dr. Daren Kest, ENT, will follow at approximately 10:20 a.m. with a discussion of head and neck cancers.

The screenings, held in the AMH Wound Care Center, will include colorectal screenings with a PSA by Dr. Mark Woodson, medical oncologist; skin cancer screenings by Dr. Noor Ahmed, plastic surgeon; lung function tests by the AMH Respiratory Department; and breast exams by Mary Ann Pass and Dr. Nicol McDonald of Southern Illinois Health Foundation.

These screening tests are done so that cancers can be found as early as possible – while they are small and before they have spread. In general, the earlier a cancer is found and treated, the better the chances are for living for many years.

Cancer is the general name for a group of more than 100 diseases. Although there are many kinds of cancer, all cancers start because abnormal cells grow out of control. Untreated cancers can cause serious illness and death.

Normal cells in the body

The body is made up of trillions of living cells. Normal body cells grow, divide, and die in an orderly fashion. During the early years of a person's life, normal cells divide faster to allow the person to grow. After the person becomes an adult, most cells divide only to replace worn-out or dying cells or to repair injuries.

How cancer starts

Cancer starts when cells in a part of the body start to grow out of control. Cancer cell growth is different from normal cell growth. Instead of dying, cancer cells continue to grow and form new, abnormal cells. Cancer cells can also invade other tissues, something that normal cells cannot do. Growing out of control and invading other tissues are what makes a cell a cancer cell.

In most cases, the cancer cells form a tumor. Some cancers, like leukemia, rarely form tumors. Instead, these cancer cells involve the blood and blood-forming organs and circulate through other tissues where they grow.

How cancer spreads

Cancer cells often travel to other parts of the body where they begin to grow and form new tumors. This happens when the cancer cells get into the body's bloodstream or lymph vessels. Over time, the tumors replace normal tissue. The process of cancer spreading is called metastasis.

How cancers differ

No matter where a cancer may spread, it's always named for the place where it started. For example, breast cancer that has spread to the liver is called metastatic breast cancer, not liver cancer. Likewise, prostate cancer that has spread to the bone is called metastatic prostate cancer, not bone cancer.

Different types of cancer can behave very differently. For instance, lung cancer and skin cancer are very different diseases. They grow at different rates and respond to different treatments. This is why people with cancer need treatment that is aimed at their kind of cancer.

