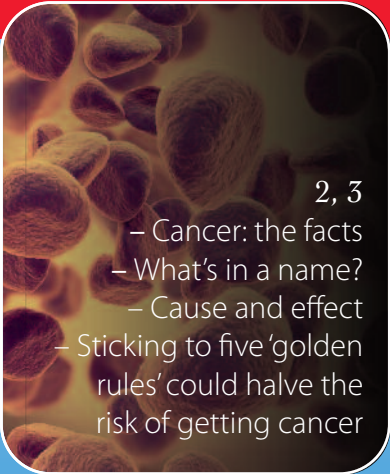


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Cancer

cut the risk



Dear Seafarer,

Most of you will know someone whose life has been affected in some way by cancer. It may be a colleague who has been diagnosed with the disease or a friend or relative who is being treated for cancer.

The causes of cancer are diverse, complex and only partially understood. Many things are known to increase the risk of cancer, including tobacco use, dietary factors, certain infections, exposure to radiation, lack of physical activity, obesity and environmental pollutants.

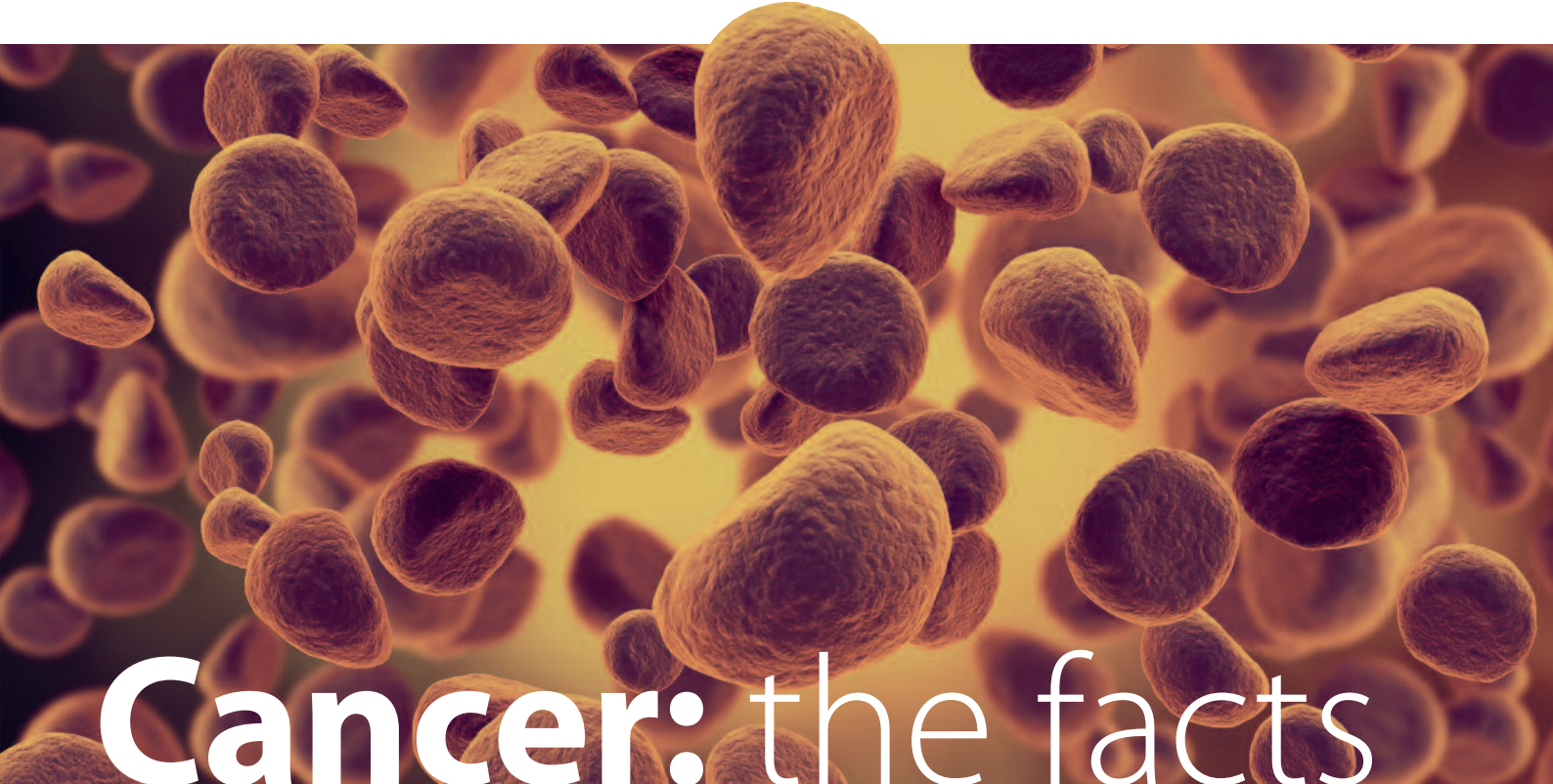
Fortunately, the treatment of cancer has advanced tremendously in recent times. Although some cancers are slow growing and may not pose an immediate threat, early detection is often key to successful treatment. In the first stages of the disease, cancer usually has no symptoms, but if any of the following are experienced it is advisable to seek medical guidance:

- + Change in bowel or bladder habits
- + A sore that does not heal
- + Unusual bleeding or discharge
- + Indigestion or difficulty swallowing

- + Obvious change in the size, colour, shape, or thickness of a wart, mole, or mouth sore
 - + Nagging cough or hoarseness
- The following symptoms may also signal the presence of some form of cancer:
- + Coughing up blood
 - + Persistent headaches
 - + Unexplained loss of weight or appetite
 - + Chronic pain in bones
 - + Persistent fatigue, nausea, or vomiting
 - + Persistent low-grade fever, either constant or intermittent
 - + Repeated instances of infection

While there may be an innocent reason for any of these symptoms it is better not to ignore them, because the earlier treatment is commenced, the more likely it is that it will be successful.

If you have any questions about anything in this edition of Health Watch, please do not hesitate to contact us at the e-mail address on the back page.



Cancer: the facts

Cancer is a broad term which refers to a range of diseases that occur when abnormal cells divide and grow rapidly, invading and spreading throughout the body in an uncontrollable way.

Our bodies are made up of trillions of cells which are designed to grow, divide and die. As adults, normal cells in our bodies divide but only if worn out or dying cells need to be replaced. Cancer cells are abnormal because they keep on growing in an out of control way, forming new cancer cells which invade other tissue in the body.

Cancer cells will often form a tumour but in some types of cancer, such as leukaemia, cancer cells are found in bone marrow and blood instead.

Cancer can be fatal but knowing the signs and symptoms of different types of cancer, as detailed in this newsletter, can help you to seek medical help at an early stage. If cancer is detected early, this can improve your chances of recovery. Some types of cancer are more aggressive than others and unfortunately the fatality rates for these types of cancer are high.

What's in a name?

Different types of cancer are usually named after the body part or organ they start in. For example, cancer which begins in the pancreas is called pancreatic cancer and lung cancer begins in the lung.

Cancer can spread into different parts of the body but wherever it spreads to, it maintains its original name. So, if lung cancer spreads into the liver, this will not be called liver cancer but 'lung cancer with secondary cancer in the liver'.

The process of cancer spreading through the blood or lymphatic system from one part of the body to another non-neighbouring part is called metastasis.

Cancer cells can spread into other parts of the body through the blood or lymphatic systems.

Cause and effect

Cancer begins as a single cell but the change from a normal cell into a cancerous cell happens because of the relationship between an individual's genetic make-up and outside factors.

Factors which can increase your risk of developing cancer include:

- + Smoking
- + Alcohol
- + An unhealthy diet
- + Physical inactivity
- + Exposure to carcinogens – substances which are known to play a direct role in causing cancer

Some well-known carcinogens are:

- + Physical carcinogens, such as nuclear radiation, X-rays or ultra-violet radiation from the sun

- + Chemical carcinogens, including asbestos and arsenic. Smoking tobacco is one of the biggest chemical risk factors for cancer

- + Biological carcinogens, which can include infections from bacteria, parasites or viruses. For example, infections caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) or Hepatitis B and C (HBV and HCV) are risk factors for some cancers

Age is another important factor which can play a part in cancer – an individual's chances of getting cancer can increase as they age, particularly because the number of risk factors an individual is exposed to can build up over time.

Sticking to five 'golden rules' could halve the risk of getting cancer

Researchers have found that making easy changes to your lifestyle can help ward off cancer.

Following the 'golden rules' - quitting smoking, losing weight, exercising regularly, drinking less alcohol and eating more fruit and vegetables - can help to cut the risk of the disease by up to 50%.

The first study to look at the effect of following the five rules, carried out at the University of Paris South over a 15-year period and involving more than 65,000 people, found that following all five could have a major effect on cancer death rates and that many cancers can be prevented by small adjustments to diet and lifestyle.

Of those tracked in the study - all middle-aged women - 7,000 got cancer of one type or another and those who followed the five steps were 19% less likely to get any kind of cancer. Risk of bowel cancer was slashed by 44% and it was found that sticking to the rules could have prevented almost half of all lung cancers.

Although the study was carried out on women only, researchers say it shows how lifestyle plays a vital role in the risk of cancer. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 30% of cancer deaths are due to the five leading behavioural and dietary risks.

Smoking is the single greatest avoidable risk factor for cancer and, according to the WHO, tobacco use is the most important risk factor for cancer, causing over 20% of global cancer deaths and about 70% of global lung cancer deaths. It can also be the cause of cancers of the bladder, bowel, kidney, oesophagus, pancreas, stomach and mouth, among others.

Reduce the risk: quit smoking.

Alcohol consumption also increases the risk of cancer, particularly oral cancers, laryngeal, oesophageal, bowel, breast and liver cancer. Risk of cancers of the upper aerodigestive tract (oesophagus, oral cavity, pharynx and larynx) increases with the amount of

alcohol consumed - someone drinking 100g a day (a pint of ordinary strength lager or a 175ml glass of wine is each 16g) has a four to six-fold increased risk of these cancers compared to moderate or non-drinkers.

Reduce the risk: cut down on the amount of alcohol you consume - no more than two units a day (men) and one unit a day (women) as recommended by the European Code Against Cancer.

Fruit and vegetables contain cancer-fighting antioxidant nutrients such as vitamin C and carotenoids and some cancers have been linked to people eating fewer than five portions a day. Cancers associated with this factor include oral, oesophageal, stomach, lung and laryngeal.

Reduce the risk: eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

It is difficult to separate the effects of **physical inactivity** from those of

increased body weight but there is consistent evidence to show that people with higher levels of physical activity have a lower risk of colon, breast and womb cancer which are independent of body weight.

Reduce the risk: Have at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity over a week in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is the most commonly used measure of body weight and those with excess body weight are more at risk for cancers of the kidney, oesophagus, colon, gallbladder, pancreas and womb among others.

Your BMI is calculated by dividing your weight (kg) by your height (metres) and by then dividing this answer by your height again. This will give you your BMI.

So for example, if you weigh 90kg and you're 1.80m tall, divide 90 by 1.80. The answer is 50. Then divide this answer by 1.80 again - the answer is 27.7.

The healthy BMI range is 18.5 to 25 - you can reduce your risk of cancer by maintaining a healthy weight within this BMI range.



Bladder cancer

Risk factors:

- + Smoking
- + Being exposed to cancer-causing chemicals or conditions at work
- + Long-term or repeated urinary tract infections (UTIs)

Symptoms:

- + Blood in your urine
- + A need to urinate more frequently
- + Sudden urges to urinate
- + Pain when passing urine

Lower your risk:

- + Don't smoke
- + Avoid exposure to cancer-causing chemicals or conditions at work
- + Follow a diet high in fruit and vegetables and low in fat

Prostate cancer

Risk factors:

- + Mainly affects men aged over 50
- + Family history and genetics
- + Ethnicity – black men are more likely to develop this form of cancer
- + Diet/lifestyle

Symptoms:

- + Needing to urinate more frequently, often during the night
- + Needing to rush to the toilet
- + Difficulty in starting to urinate
- + Straining or taking a long time while urinating
- + Weak flow
- + Feeling your bladder has not emptied fully

Lower your risk:

- + Follow a healthy diet
- + Maintain a healthy weight
- + Exercise most days of the week
- + Talk to your doctor about your risk

Leukaemia

Leukaemia is a cancer of blood-forming cells and there are different types.

Risk factors:

- + Exposure to certain cancer-causing chemicals such as benzene
- + Radiation
- + Past treatment with chemotherapy
 - + Certain genetic disorders
 - + Smoking

Symptoms:

- + Anaemia (causing tiredness and breathlessness)
- + Blood clotting problems
- + Serious infections

Lower your risk:

- + Avoid exposure to cancer-causing chemicals such as benzene
- + Don't smoke
- + Avoid radiation

Pancreatic cancer

Risk factors:

- + Smoking
- + Suffering from chronic pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas, often caused by alcohol abuse)

- + Diabetes
- + Being overweight
- + Family history
- + Alcohol
- + A poor diet
- + Having an infection due to the bacteria *Helicobacter pylori* (H.pylori) or Hepatitis B or C

Symptoms:

Early symptoms can be vague and easy to mistake for other things. They include:

- + Loss of appetite
- + Back pain
- + Weight loss
- + Pain in the stomach area
- + Jaundice

Later symptoms include:

- + Diabetes
- + Itching
- + Sickness
- + Bowel changes
- + Fever and shivering

Liver cancer

Risk factors:

- + Males are at a higher risk than females
- + Smoking
- + Infections
- + Cirrhosis of the liver
- + Alcohol
- + Radiation
- + Being overweight

Symptoms often only occur once the disease is at an advanced stage. They include:

- + Nausea
- + Unexplained weight loss
- + Tiredness
- + Vomiting
- + Jaundice

Lower your risk:

- + Maintain a healthy weight
- + Follow a healthy diet
- + Cut down on alcohol use



Lower your risk:

- + Don't smoke
- + Maintain a healthy weight
- + Follow a healthy diet
- + Cut down on alcohol use
- + Avoid exposure to carcinogens
- + Prevent yourself from developing diabetes

Oesophageal cancer

The oesophagus is the medical name for the gullet which carries food from the throat to the stomach. There are two types of oesophageal cancer – squamous cell carcinoma which forms in the upper part, and adenocarcinoma which forms in the lower part.

Risk factors:

- + Mainly affects over 55s
- + More common in men
- + Smoking
- + High alcohol consumption
- + Being exposed to cancer-causing chemicals or conditions at work
- + Being overweight
- + Low fruit and vegetable diet

Symptoms:

- + Difficulty swallowing
- + Unexplained weight loss
- + Pain when swallowing
- + Throat pain and discomfort
- + Persistent indigestion
- + Hoarseness
- + Persistent cough
- + Vomiting
- + Coughing blood

Lower your risk:

- + Don't smoke
- + Cut down on alcohol
- + Lose and/or maintain a healthy weight
- + Eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- + Avoid exposure to cancer-causing chemicals or conditions at work

Stomach cancer

Risk factors:

- + Aged 55 or older
- + Being male
- + Smoking
- + Eating a diet containing a lot of salted and pickled foods and low in fruit and vegetables
- + Having an infection in your stomach due to the bacteria *Helicobacter pylori* (H.pylori)
- + Family history
- + Being exposed to cancer-causing chemicals or conditions at work

Advance symptoms include:

- + Blood in stools or black stools
- + Loss of appetite
- + Weight loss

Lower your risk:

- + Avoid a diet high in smoked and pickled foods and salted meat and fish
- + Eat more fresh fruit and vegetables
- + Take more exercise and maintain a healthy weight
- + Don't smoke

Symptoms:

Early symptoms can be vague and easy to mistake for other things. They include:

- + Persistent indigestion and heartburn
- + Trapped wind and frequent burping
- + Feeling full or bloated after meals
- + Persistent stomach pain



Bowel cancer

Bowel cancer is a general term for cancer that begins in the large bowel. Depending on where it starts, bowel cancer is sometimes called colon cancer or rectal cancer.

Risk factors:

- + Age – nearly three quarters of cases are in the over 65s
- + High intake of red and processed meats and low fibre
- + Being overweight
- + Being inactive
- + High alcohol consumption
- + Smoking
- + Family history
- + Related bowel conditions

Symptoms:

- + Blood in stool or bleeding from rectum (though this can be due to haemorrhoids)
- + A change in normal bowel habits such as diarrhoea or constipation lasting longer than three weeks
- + Abdominal pain

- + Unexplained weight loss
- + In advancing cases – anaemia (fatigue and breathlessness)

In some cases it can cause an obstruction in the bowel and symptoms of this include:

- + A feeling of bloating, usually around the navel
- + Abdominal pain
- + Constipation
- + Vomiting

Lower your risk:

- + Eat less red and processed meat (no more than 70g per day) and eat a diet low in fat, high in fibre with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables
- + Have at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity each week
- + Try to maintain a healthy weight
- + Don't smoke
- + Cut down on alcohol intake



Kidney cancer

Risk factors:

- + Males are at more risk than females
- + The risk increases with age
- + Being overweight
- + Smoking
- + Suffering from some medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, kidney stones or acquired cystic kidney disease

Main symptoms:

- + Finding blood in your urine
- + A lump or mass in the kidney area

Other, more vague symptoms:

- + Feeling tired
- + Weight loss
- + A high temperature with heavy sweating
- + Loss of appetite
- + A persistent pain in your side (below your ribs)
- + Generally feeling unwell

Lower your risk:

- + Eat a healthy diet
- + Take regular exercise
- + Don't smoke



Skin cancer

Risk factors:

- + Ultraviolet radiation from exposure to the sun or sunbeds
- + Having light skin, fair hair and light eye colour
- + Having skin which sunburns easily and rarely tans

- + A family or personal history of skin cancer
- + Severe sunburn in the past
- + People with some medical conditions, such as Crohn's disease, may be at higher risk of developing skin cancer
- + Exposure to carcinogens such as pitch, creosote, coal tar, arsenic compounds and radium

Symptoms:

- + A spot or sore on your skin which doesn't heal in four weeks

- + A spot or sore which itches, scabs, bleeds or causes you pain for over four weeks
- + A patch where the skin is broken or ulcerated without reason and which doesn't heal within four weeks
- + A pink or red lump which may be scaly or shiny in appearance and may bleed easily
- + An itchy, red patch anywhere on the skin or genitals. A white, itchy patch in your mouth
- + Melanoma is a form of skin cancer which develops from moles. If you have moles

Oral cancer

Oral cancer affects the mouth, lips, teeth or gums.

Risk factors:

- + Smoking
- + Using smokeless tobacco (chewing or inhaling tobacco nasally)
- + Alcohol
- + Solar radiation can cause lip cancer
- + Infection with the human papilloma virus (HPV)
- + A diet rich in red meats and fried foods

Symptoms:

- + A mouth ulcer or multiple mouth ulcers which won't heal
- + Patches (red and white or red) on your tongue or in your mouth
- + A swelling in your mouth which doesn't go away after a few weeks

Lower your risk:

- + Don't smoke
- + Lessen your alcohol consumption
- + Eat a healthy diet
- + Make sure you have regular dental check-ups. A dentist will be able to spot the signs of oral cancer early

on your skin, you should check them regularly for changes. If a mole gets bigger, changes colour or gets darker or patchy, changes shape or develops an irregular border, becomes itchy or painful, bleeds, loses symmetry or becomes crusty or inflamed in appearance, this could be signs of melanoma and you should seek medical advice

Lower your risk:

- + Avoid spending time in the sun,

Lung cancer

Risk factors:

- + Smoking causes 9 out of 10 cases of lung cancer
- + Passive smoking (breathing in smoke from other people's cigarettes) can increase your risk of developing lung cancer
- + There is a small risk of developing lung cancer through exposure to some workplace carcinogens such as asbestos, silica, and diesel exhaust fumes, but this risk is very small compared to the risk from smoking

Lung cancer often has no symptoms in the early stages. As the condition progresses, you may experience symptoms such as:

- + A persistent cough which lasts over two or three weeks
 - + Regular chest infections
 - + Coughing up blood

- + Aches or pains when you breathe or cough
- + Breathlessness
- + Frequently feeling tired or lacking in energy
- + Having a lack of appetite or unexplained weight loss
- + Some less common symptoms of lung cancer are changes in the appearance of your fingers (finger clubbing), pain or difficulty when swallowing, a high temperature, a hoarse voice, wheezing, chest or shoulder pain and a swelling in your face or neck

Lower your risk:

- + Don't smoke. Speak to a medical professional to get help to quit smoking
- + Protect yourself from workplace carcinogens



- particularly when it is hottest (11am to 3pm)
- + Cover up by wearing a t-shirt, sunglasses and a hat
- + Use sunscreen. This should be at least sun protection factor (SPF) 15 but the higher the better. Make sure your sunscreen has UVA protection
- + Avoid using sunbeds. The UV rays sunbeds give off can be 10 to 15 times higher than those from the midday sun. Sunbeds greatly increase your risk of developing skin cancer, especially

malignant melanoma – the most serious form of skin cancer

- + Remember, there is no such thing as a 'safe' or 'healthy' tan. Skin becomes tanned because of an increase in skin pigment (melanin) and a tan is actually a sign of skin damage. Tanning also causes wrinkles, premature ageing and leathery texture of the skin
- + Too much exposure to UV rays can also suppress your immune system and can impact on the skin's natural defences



The right treatment

- + If you have any symptoms discussed in this newsletter or if you are worried or would like more advice about cancer, you should seek medical advice. This is important because early detection of cancer can mean treatment is more effective and can greatly improve your chances of recovery
- + Chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery are three important examples of cancer treatment but cancer treatments are made on a case by case basis and what treatment is given can depend on the cancer type, how aggressive it is and a person's own general health and fitness. Treatment for cancer also varies very much depending on which type of cancer is diagnosed



A game of numbers

- + The latest statistics on cancer suggest that in 2012 alone, worldwide there were 14.1 million adults diagnosed with new cases of cancer and in the same year, 8.2 million people died from cancer
- + The most common cancers worldwide are lung (13%), female breast (12%), bowel (10%) and prostate (8%)
- + Lung cancer is the biggest killer – around one fifth of global cancer deaths are caused by lung cancer
- + According to the WHO, around 30% of cancer deaths could have been prevented if the five 'Golden Rules' (see page three) were followed because diet and lifestyle are important contributing factors towards your chances of getting cancer
- + Survival statistics for cancer vary globally but in England and Wales, of those people diagnosed with cancer in 2007, it is believed that 46% of men and 56% of women will survive their cancer for at least five years. A patient's survival from cancer can depend on the characteristics of their cancer and their own general health

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