

# LGBTQ+ History Month

## Cancer awareness – signs and symptoms of cancer

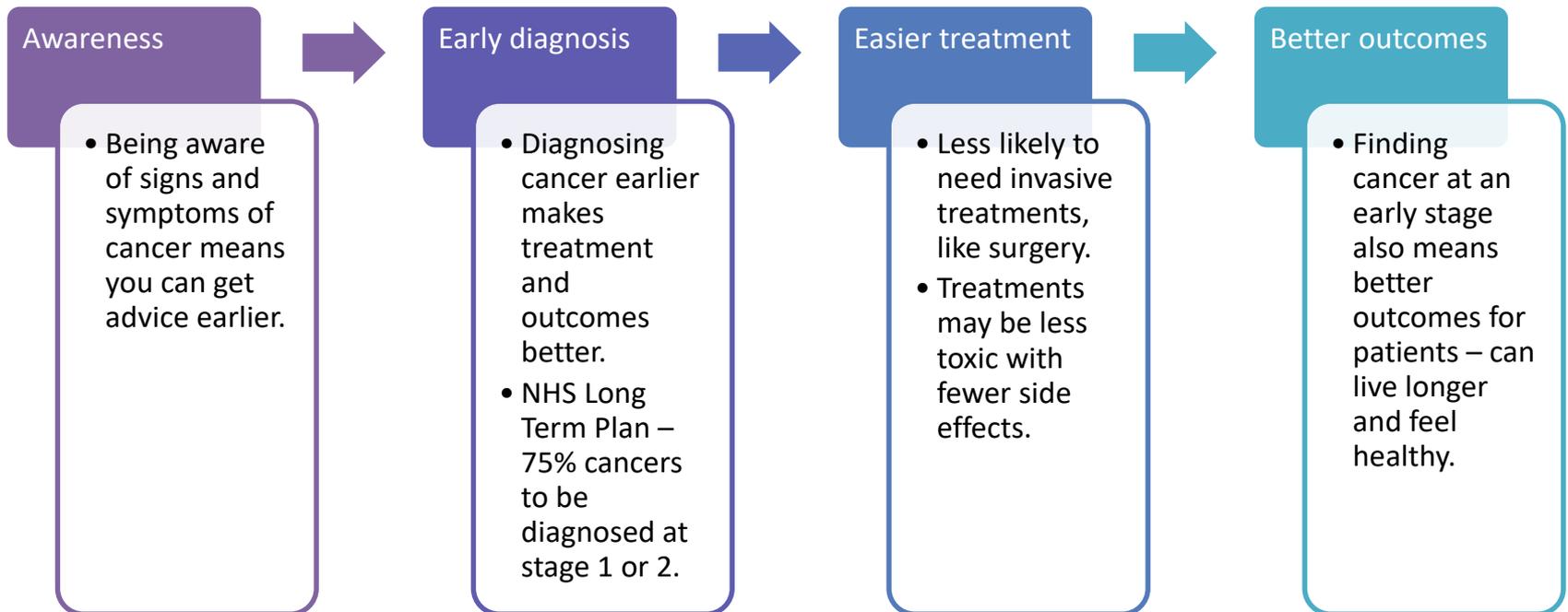
Caroline Cook and Paul Thomas  
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# What we will cover today

- Why we are here
- Facts about cancer
- Myths and misinformation
- Cancer awareness
  - Cancer symptoms
  - Risks and how to reduce these
- When to get help and why we might not seek advice

# Why are we talking about cancer?

Knowing what to be aware of means you can get treatment earlier and have better outcomes.



# Facts about cancer

- Cancer starts when genetic changes make cells grow and multiply too much in an uncontrolled way.
- These changes usually happen slowly over a person's lifetime, so the risk of cancer is greater in older people.
- Cancer is not one disease but a collection of diseases.
  - There are more than 200 different types of cancer.
- In the UK, around 360,000 people are diagnosed with cancer every year.
- Cancer is more common than you think - 1 in 2 people in the UK will get cancer in their lifetime.
- Cancer is a long-term condition – it is possible to live with cancer for a long time.
- About 40% of cancers are preventable.



# Myths and misconceptions

- Social media can be a blessing and a curse – it's a great way to share information.
- Misinformation spreads quickly and can be dangerous.

Cancer is a death sentence

I have no family history of cancer so I won't get it

Cancer treatments kill more people than they cure

Having surgery makes cancer spread

Eating sugar makes cancer grow

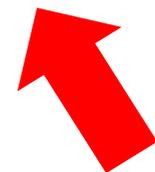
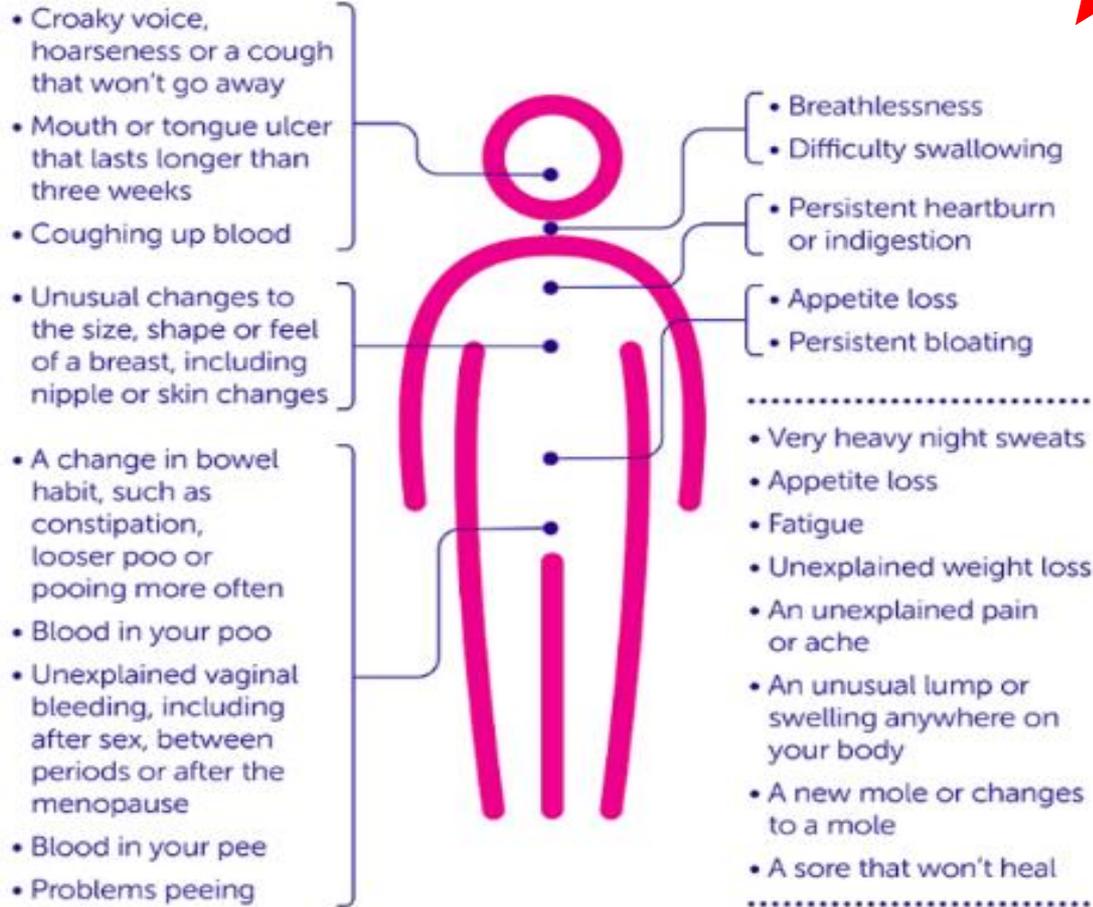
Eating dairy foods causes cancer

Superfoods prevent cancer

Stress causes cancer

# Cancer symptoms

These are some of the key signs and symptoms of cancer. But if something's unusual for you, it's best to tell your doctor – even if it's not on this list.



Know your body – what is unusual for you?

All of these may be symptoms of other illnesses, but it's important to get checked by your GP.

# Breast cancer

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK.
  - 15 out of 100 (15%) of all newly diagnosed cancers in the UK are breast cancer.
- According to Cancer Research UK (CRUK) about 54,700 women and 390 men were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017.
- Survival in the UK has doubled over the last 40 years and continues to improve.
- Regular breast checks will help you to find symptoms early, such as:
  - a new lump or thickening in your breast or armpit
  - a change in size, shape or feel of your breast
  - skin changes in the breast such as puckering, dimpling, a rash or redness of the skin
  - fluid leaking from the nipple
  - changes in the position of the nipple

# Cervical cancer

- Anyone who has a cervix can develop cervical cancer.
- In the UK, more than half of cervical cancers are detected in women aged under 45 and the highest incidence rates are in females aged 30 to 34.
- It accounts for 2% of all new cancer cases in females in the UK and less than 1% of all new cancer cases in females and males combined in the UK.
- 99.8% of cervical cancer cases in the UK are caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).
- HPV is transmitted by skin to skin contact and not just by penetrative sex.
- Common symptoms are:
  - unusual vaginal bleeding, e.g. between periods
  - pain or discomfort during sex
  - vaginal discharge
  - pain in the area between the hip bones (pelvis)

# Bowel cancer

- Bowel cancer is the 4th most common cancer in the UK, accounting for 11% of all new cancer cases (2017).
- 44% of bowel cancer cases in the UK are in females, and 56% are in males.
- The most common symptoms are:
  - bleeding from the rectum or blood in your poo
  - a persistent change in your normal bowel habit
  - a feeling of needing to strain, even after opening your bowels
  - losing weight
  - pain in your abdomen or rectum
  - tiredness and breathlessness
  - a lump in your rectum or tummy (abdomen)
  - bloating

# Lung cancer

- Lung cancer is the 3rd most common cancer in the UK, accounting for 13% of all new cancer cases (2017)
- There is a strong relation between lung cancer incidence and age.
  - Higher incidence in older people - on average each year more than 4 in 10 new cases (44%) are in people aged 75 and over.
  - Incidence rates rise steeply from about the age of 45-49.
  - The highest rates are in in the 80 to 84 age group for females and the 85 to 89 age group for males
- Lung cancer is often diagnosed at a late stage
  - 72-76% are diagnosed at stage III or IV while 24-28% are diagnosed at stage I or II.

# Lung cancer vs. Covid-19

Feature of lung cancer	Symptom	Feature of Covid-19
An unexplained cough or a cough that lasts for more than 3 weeks.	Cough	A cough that starts suddenly and quickly gets worse
Getting out of breath doing the things you used to do easily	Breathlessness	Suddenly starting to feel out of breath
Feeling tired for more than 4 weeks	Fatigue	Feeling tired unexpectedly and quickly

## *Other possible symptoms – ‘red flags’*

Red flags for lung cancer	Red flags for Covid-19
Coughing up blood or blood in your phlegm	Fever
Chest pain or shoulder pain	Aching body/limbs
Losing weight for unexplained reasons – no change in diet or exercise	Loss of taste
Loss of appetite	Loss of smell
Repeated chest infections	General flu-like symptoms

# Known risks of cancer

- Age
- Smoking
- Family history
- Being overweight
- Lack of physical exercise
- Unhealthy diet
- High alcohol consumption
- Environmental factors – exposure to asbestos, chemicals, radon
- Low immunity – due to immunosuppressant medication or medical conditions which lower the immune system.
- Viruses and bacteria linked to cancers – e.g. HPV and cervical cancer, Hep B/C and liver cancer, HIV and Kaposi's sarcoma.



# Some things we can't change...

- Aging
- Genetics and family history
- Some environmental factors
  - Most cancer causing chemicals are banned, but exposure may have happened years ago.
  - Radon occurs naturally in rocks – some areas this is more concentrated than others.



## ...but some things we can

Research shows that 4 in 10 cancers can be prevented

- Be aware of our bodies – know what doesn't feel right.
- Checks at home – check breasts or testicles for lumps.
- Attend screening appointments when invited.
- Give up smoking – better still don't start.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Make healthy lifestyle choices
  - Eat a healthy, balanced, high fibre diet.
  - Get some physical exercise.
  - Stick to government guidelines around alcohol intake.
- Protect your skin from the sun



# When to get help

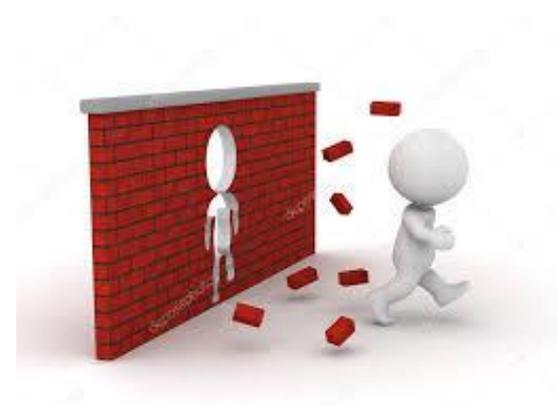
- The NHS is open for business and has measures in place to keep patients and staff safe from Covid-19 – don't let this stop you from seeking medical advice.
- Your GP should be your first contact if you notice:
  - Any of the possible symptoms of cancer e.g. lumps, bumps, pain, unusual bleeding.
  - A change in your body which does not feel right for you.
- If your GP thinks your symptoms may be cancer, they can arrange for you to have tests and see a specialist quickly.
- Remember - it's best to have any unusual symptoms checked early when cancer is easier to treat.



# Barriers to seeking advice

- Fear of being diagnosed with cancer
- Denial – “I’ll be okay”, “Maybe, it’ll go away”
- Embarrassment – not wanting to undress in front of a medical professional, issues with body image, body dysmorphia
- Lack of understanding or sensitivity of medical staff
- Previous bad experience
- Cultural issues – fatalism, stigma
- Language barriers
- Practical – unable to access services due to work patterns, disability etc.

What can we do to break down these barriers?



# More information

Lots of useful information is available – just be sure it is from a reliable source.

Some suggested websites:

- [NHS](#)
- [Cancer Research UK](#)
- [Macmillan Cancer Support](#)
- [Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust](#)
- [Eve Appeal](#)
- [British Lung Foundation](#)
- [Breast Cancer Now](#)
- [Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation](#)
- [Bowel Cancer UK](#)

**Thank you  
for listening**



# Contacts



Caroline Cook – Programme Manager for Prevention, Awareness and Screening – [caroline.cook9@nhs.net](mailto:caroline.cook9@nhs.net)

Paul Thomas – Communications and Engagement Manager – [p.thomas6@nhs.net](mailto:p.thomas6@nhs.net)



[North East London Cancer Alliance](#)

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