

## WORLD CANCER DAY TODAY

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**New Delhi (IANS):** Being diagnosed with cancer at a prime age with flying dreams and a family to look after can be earth-shattering for most people. But when it comes to facing the stark reality, whom does one blame for the slow but certain decay of cells and tissues in your body.

At a time when health practitioners globally are becoming certain they can cure any form of cancer (depending on the stage of discovery), the real fight for cancer-stricken people is to choose between two realities: Embrace the situation with humility and prepare themselves for the long-drawn medical procedures or give up and let it progress.

"If a person is unfortunate to get cancer, the most important thing is to maintain a positive attitude. Further, he or she should identify people from family or friends who will be standing with him or her throughout the procedures," Dr Ajit Saxena, consultant urologist and andrologist at the Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals in the capital, said.

"Next is to search for the best oncologist for the particular cancer treatment, depending on the organ affected. Whatever be the situation, it is best to consider things rationally, apply the mind

## Diagnosed with cancer? Don't take it lying down

Whatever be the situation, it is best to consider things rationally, apply the mind to find the best treatment available and fight it out. Wear a positive attitude and give it a tough competition with smile, grit and determination

to find the best treatment available and fight it out," Dr Saxena said. The next stage is to connect with cancer support groups online or offline to prepare yourselves for the battle ahead.

"Life is priceless and there should be no option to give it up. Help in one form or the other can be offered to all patients at any stage of cancer. We may enable them to meet realistic goals and lead a better quality of life given the situation they are faced with," Dr Harit Chaturvedi, chairman, Max Institute of Oncology at Max Hospitals, emphasised.

Fully aware that you have been diagnosed with cancer, do not just go on blaming your fate. While more and more triggers are becoming increasingly known, it is still difficult to pinpoint one cause for any particular cancer. Some of the known associated

factors, however, are unhealthy lifestyle, tobacco and alcohol consumption, viral infections, family history and, of course, ageing. "It is a consequence of interplay of multiple factors such as bad habits, bad lifestyle, ageing, obesity, environmental and genetic mutations," notes Dr Sanjay Dudhat, head of surgical oncology from Nanavati Super Specialty Hospital in Mumbai.

If a patient is diagnosed with cancer, the first thing he or she requires is counselling. Proper disclosure of diagnosis, correcting patients' myths about cancer and explaining the proper treatment strategies to the patient and relatives result in better acceptance and also reduces mental trauma. "Proper treatment along with boosting the morale of the patient will get better results. So do not ever give up and fight cancer regardless," Dr Dudhat adds.

For those who are healthy and the disease does not run in the family, making simple changes can result in saying goodbye to cancer. "Screening! Screening! Screening! Early diagnosis of any cancer makes all the difference between life and death," says Dr Saxena, also a pioneer in robotic surgery (urology).

"In the case of prostate cancer, a simple blood test can detect early stages. Whole body scan can pick up early cancer stages. This is

important particularly in cases where there is a family history of cancer," he advises. According to Dr Sidarth Sahni from department of surgical oncology at Indraprastha

Apollo, woman should be aware of complications in the breast. "Every woman, irrespective of family history, needs to have a mammogram done every year after age 40 as breast cancer is the fastest growing disease in women in India," he told IANS.

In middle age, avoid smoking and tobacco, cut alcohol consumption, hit the gym or join a neighbourhood yoga and meditation session followed by brisk walk. And do not forget adding fruits and vegetables to your grocery list. Maintain healthy weight and be physically active, get immunised against Hepatitis B and HPV viruses, have safe and protected sex and opt for regular health check-ups are some of the other steps doctors suggest.

For those diagnosed with cancer, reading "Being Mortal" helps. It's a highly-acclaimed book by Dr Atul Gawande, a New York-based surgeon that carries several moving stories about his family, friends and patients describing how someone could better live with age-related or otherwise serious illnesses. "Arriving at an acceptance of one's mortality and a clear understanding of the limits and the possibilities of medicine is a process, not an epiphany," he writes.

Above all, wear a positive attitude. If cancer has entered your life, give it a tough competition with smile, grit and determination. "I strongly believe that life is not about waiting for the storm to pass but about learning how to dance in the rain," Dr Chaturvedi of Max Institute says.

