



# Making Strides Against Cancer

Why Me?  
The Antigua & Barbuda Cancer Society

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- Special points of interest:**
- ◆ Bone Cancer
  - ◆ Health Matters
  - ◆ Never Too Late!
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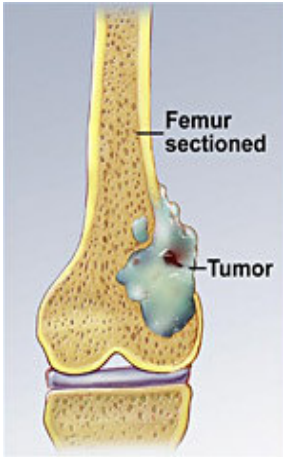


A producer is a farmer who grows crops or a rancher who raises livestock for food consumption.

An extension agent works with producers and communities to help them be more efficient and environmentally friendly.

An agricultural scientist studies farm crops and animals and develops ways to improve their quality with less labor, control pests and weeds more safely and effectively, and conserve soil and water.

## BONE CANCER



**DEFINITION:**  
Cancer that originates in the bone—primary bone cancer is rare. Fewer than 2,500 cases are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. The condition affects more children than adults.

The most common forms of primary

bone cancer are:

- **Osteosarcoma**, which occurs primarily in growing bone tissue
- **Chondrosarcoma**, which occurs in cartilage
- **Ewings's sarcoma**, which arises primarily in **Osteosarcoma** and **Ewing's sarcoma** occur most often in children, adolescents and young adults, ages 10 to 20. **Chondrosarcoma** is more common in adults over 50.

Treatment of bone cancer depends on the type of bone cancer, as well as its location, size and stage. Specific bone cancer causes have yet to be determined. However, research has identified certain risk factors—such as a history of Paget's disease or previous treatment with chemotherapy—that may act together to increase a person's risk of developing it. Scientists do know that bone cancer is not contagious—you cannot "catch" it from another person.

What causes Bone Cancer? No one knows the exact causes of bone cancer, and doctors can seldom explain why one person will get bone cancer and another person will not. Bone Cancer research has shown that people with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop the condition. A risk factor

is anything that increases a person's chance of developing a disease.

Know the Risk Factors. Specific risk factors for bone cancer include:

- Being a child or young adult
- Previous radiation or chemotherapy
- History of Paget's disease
- Family history of bone cancer
- People with hereditary retinoblastoma

**SYMPTOMS:**

Pain is the most common bone cancer symptom. Although bone cancer can arise in any of your bones, it most frequently occurs in the long bones of your arms and legs.

Other possible symptoms and signs of bone cancer include:

- *Weakened bones, sometimes leading to fractures*
- *Joint swelling and tenderness (for tumors in or near joints)*
- *Fatigue*
- *Fever*
- *Unintended weight loss*
- *Anemia*

**CAUSES:**

Primary bone cancer is different from secondary or metastatic bone cancer. In secondary or metastatic bone cancer, the cancer originates in a different place but spreads (metastasizes) to the bones. For example, someone with prostate cancer may develop bone lesions from the prostate cancer. But, even though the cancer has spread to the bone, it's still prostate cancer.

Metastatic bone cancer is much more common than is primary bone cancer. Additionally, primary bone cancer doesn't refer to cancer that begins in the bone marrow the soft inner core of your bones that makes your blood cells. Bone marrow cancers include diseases such as multiple myeloma and acute and chronic leukemias.

In general, no one knows for certain what causes most primary bone cancers. Adults with Paget's disease of bone, which involves abnormal development of new bone cells, may be at risk in a few cases, bone cancers may have a hereditary component, such as in:

- **Li-Fraumeni syndrome.** This condition is characterized by an increased risk of many different cancers, including osteosarcoma, breast cancer, brain cancer and others.
- **Rothmund-Thomson syndrome.** This condition causes short stature, skeletal problems and rashes, and increases risk of bone cancer.
- **Hereditary retinoblastoma.** Children with this rare cancer of the eye have an increased risk of osteosarcoma.
- **Multiple exostoses.** Children with this inherited condition that causes cartilage bumps to form on your bones have an increased risk of chondrosarcoma.

**THE ASSOCIATION WITH RADIATION:**

Radiation is occasionally associated with bone cancer. Exposure to radiation from a diagnostic X-ray won't harm you.

But heavy doses of radiation, such as radiation therapy given for other cancers, can increase your risk of developing bone cancer, especially if you receive the therapy at a young age.

Still radiation therapy is becoming more and more sophisticated, which may lead to fewer of such side effects. For example, doctors today are better able to regulate doses of radiation and more precisely target the tumor being treated.

**WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE:**

Talk to your doctor if you develop signs or symptoms that may indicate bone cancer, such as unexplained bone pain. Having bone pain doesn't necessarily mean you have bone cancer. Bone pain is more likely due to injuries or arthritis. And bone tumors are often non-cancerous (benign).

However, the only way to determine whether a tumor is cancerous or not is for a doctor to examine a sample of the tissue.

**TEST AND DIAGNOSIS:**

If your doctor suspects you have bone cancer, he or she will take a medical history and perform a physical exam.

Besides determining whether the tissue is cancerous, examining tissue can determine how aggressive the cancer is (it's grade). Further testing, such as scans and blood tests, will determine if the cancer has spread and how far (its stage).

Childhood bone cancers, such as osteosarcoma or Ewing's sarcoma, are generally grouped into two stages, depending on whether the cancer is contained in one part of the body (localized) or has spread to other parts (metastasized).

Survival is based on a number of factors, including the type of cancer, at what stage the cancer was discovered and where the tumor is located. If the tumor is very small and localized, the prognosis is generally more promising than if the cancer has begun to spread.

Complications of bone cancer may in-

clude weakening bones and bone fractures. If the cancer spreads to other organs, complications include dysfunction of the affected organ, such as shortness of breath if it spread to your lungs.

**TREATMENT AND DRUGS:**

Surgery is the most common treatment for bone cancer. Surgery for cancer that hasn't spread involves removing the cancer and rim of healthy bone surrounding it.

In the past, amputation was common for bone cancer in an arm or leg. Today, advances in surgical techniques and chemotherapy before surgery (neoadjuvant chemotherapy) or after surgery (adjuvant chemotherapy) and radiation therapy make limb sparing surgery possible in many cases. With osteosarcoma, limb sparing surgery involves replacing the cancerous bone with artificial device (prosthesis) or bone from another part of your body or from another person (transplant).

A well coordinated team of doctors—including surgeons, medical oncologist, radiation oncologists, and physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist who are familiar with treatment of sarcomas—is important for increasing the chance you'll be able to have limb sparing treatment.

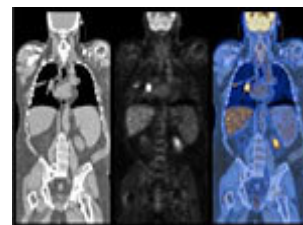
Treatment may involve chemotherapy with multiple drugs as well as radiation therapy and surgery to remove the primary tumor.

Radiation therapy—involves treating cancer with beams of high energy particles, or waves (radiation). Although radiation can affect healthy cells as well as cancer cells, it's much more harmful to cancer cells. In addition, normal cells can recover from the effects of radiation more easily than cancer cells can.

Chemotherapy use medications to kill rapidly dividing cells. These cells include cancer cells, which continuously divide to form more cells, and healthy cells that divide quickly, such as those in your bone marrow, gastrointestinal tract, reproductive system and hair follicles. Healthy cells usually recover shortly after chemotherapy is complete—so, for example, your hair soon starts growing again.



**Pet Scan for Bone Cancer**





## Yellow Ribbon for Awareness

### COPING AND SUPPORT:

A diagnosis of cancer, whether yours or your child's, presents big challenges. Remember that no matter what your concerns or the prognosis, there are resources and strategies that may make dealing with cancer easier. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Learn all you can.** Find out everything you can about your or your child's cancer—the type, stage and risks involved and your treatment options and their side effects. The more you know, the more you can participate in treatment decisions.
- **Be proactive.** Although you may feel tired and discouraged, don't let others—including your family and your doctor—make important decisions for you. It's vital that you take an active role in your own or your child's treatment.
- **Maintain a strong support system.**

Having a support system and a positive attitude can help you cope with challenges cancer brings. Although friends and family can be your best allies, they sometimes may have trouble dealing with the illness of a loved one. If so, the concern and understanding of a formal support group or of others can be especially helpful.

Although support groups aren't for everyone, they can be a good source for practical information for you and your family.

- **Maintain hope.** Although your hopes may change as you go through a cancer diagnosis and treatment, it's important to have hope. For example, when you first hear the diagnosis, you may hope that there's been a mistake. Once you accept the diagnosis, you'll hope for a good result from treatment.

One way to maintain hope is to set goals. Having goals helps you feel in control and give you a sense of purpose. But don't choose goals you can't possibly reach.

- **Take time for yourself.** Eating well, relaxing and getting enough rest can help combat the stress and fatigue of

cancer.

Also, plan ahead for the times when you may need to rest more or limit what you do. If your child has cancer, one of the most important things you can do is to take care of yourself. As a caregiver, you need to have the strength and emotional reserves to meet your child's needs.

- **Stay active.** Having cancer doesn't mean you have to stop doing the things you enjoy or normally do. For the most part, if you feel well enough to do something, go ahead and do it. It's important to stay involved as much as you can. If your child has cancer, try to keep his or her life as normal as possible.
- **Look for a connections to something beyond yourself.** Having a strong faith or a sense of something greater than yourself may help you successfully cope with cancer.

Why Me?

## Health Matters



Is there a connection between your Health and the Environment? You want to make sure you and your home are safe and healthy? You have heard the warnings about many everyday items being unsafe. Where should you start?

We all come into contact with toxins (another name for poisons) in the environment. Some are in our food, our homes, and where we work and play. There are things you can do to limit contact with them. Here are some suggestions to make your food, home and community safer. Remember that toxins are different depending where you live, so find out about those in your area.

- Choose personal care and baby products with fewer toxins: check the safety of your personal care products, like shampoo, soap and deodorant. ([www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org))
- Limit exposure to toxins in and around your home: Check out [www.webmd.com/health-ehome-p](http://www.webmd.com/health-ehome-p)
- Reduce toxins in your community find tools and tips from [www.cehrc.or/index.htm](http://www.cehrc.or/index.htm)

Improving Old MacDonald's Farm  
OUR GREEN ISLE

## Why Me? The A & B Cancer Society

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## The Joy of Dirt!

Like most everybody else on our little island, we have been a silent accomplice in the destruction of our planet. So we decided to take matters into our own hands (literally) and see what we could do to minimize our soil imprint and develop new healthy lifestyle changes that will improve our health and our environment. Why Me? The Antigua and Barbuda Cancer Society received a Global Environmental Small Grant recently. Our Green Isle...(our project) is to create and maintain a sustainable organic farm. We hope to offer you more information to continue to live healthy lifestyles and to practice preventive measures that will improve our health and our environment. We are just getting started and invite your input and volunteers are most welcome. If you don't already know the bad news...I'll make it quick...we are running out of soil...the erosion of civilization is painfully right under our feet. It's a new way of thinking and a new way of caring. We're Planting seeds of Faith, Hope and Charity.

## It's Never Too Late!!

You may not think much about your bones, but you can't make a move without them. Strong bones help you look good, stay active and feel your best. Taking good care of your bones also can help prevent osteoporosis, a disease that makes bones weak, brittle and easy to break. Both men and women can have this problem.



It's never too early or too late to take care of your bones. Bone is a living tissue, and the body builds new bone and loses old bone throughout your life span. Since bones are always changing you can't take them for granted. At each stage of your life you need to take steps to make them strong and keep them strong. Getting enough calcium and exercise, both of which help build and maintain bone, is critical. As we grow older, bone loss occurs faster than bone growth. To keep bones healthy, people ages 51 and older need to take action to limit bone loss. Some people may need to take medicines to help protect bone.

### Sex and Bone Loss

For both men and women, sex hormones help keep bones strong.

- In men, testosterone helps build stronger and bigger bones than women can achieve. But if testosterone levels fall as a man ages, bone loss is likely to be a problem.
- In women, estrogen helps protect and maintain bone. At menopause, when estrogen levels decline, bone loss becomes much more rapid. In fact, women can lose up to 20% of their bone mass in the five to seven years after menopause.

Women are also at extra risk for bone loss while they are pregnant or nursing. If women don't get enough calcium each day, the body takes what it needs for the baby's growth from the mother's bones, where most calcium is stored.

Here are a few basics that apply to any age:

1. Get enough calcium every day
2. Get regular exercise
3. Avoid lifestyle habits that harm bone, smoking, alcohol abuse.

## Making Strides

Do we assume that a child knows how to think mathematically or do multiplication tables? No, they learn that from us, we should assume that they do not have the knowledge in their heads of what necessarily makes for the healthy relationship between diet and exercise, rest and physical health.

Going green isn't just a growing trend; it involves a lifestyle change that requires an awareness of how you live, eat and shop. Adopting an eco-friendly lifestyle...because...adopting practices like recycling and reducing your energy consumption will benefit both you and Mother Earth.

Reducing your impact on the environment is a positive move for the physical health of both yourself and the planet. Air pollutants from vehicle emissions, toxic chemicals are linked to chronic respiratory conditions, cancer, heart problems and even *birth defects*. Using alternative and natural products in place of toxic chemicals are ways of going green. *Eating organic* is another healthy option when adopting a green lifestyle. Boy, and your utility bills!!! Reducing your consumption by just turning off lights and appliances, investing in energy saving lightbulbs (really works), reducing your hot water and buying energy saving appliances. You will be wonderfully surprised at the end of the month.

It's your future, that will benefit from going green. Your health, financial gain, local economy and your overall sense of accomplishment. That is...if your Future includes your Future generations.

**WHY ME?**

**THE ONLY THING AS RELENTLESS AS CANCER...IS OUR COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING IT.**