

CANCER: IF SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT, SPEAK TO YOUR GP PRACTICE

Cancer Research UK analysis shows one in two people will develop cancer in their lifetime, with around 375,400 cases diagnosed each year.

Cancer is when cells divide in an uncontrollable way, and if left untreated, these abnormal cells can spread to other parts of the body.

Symptoms can be caused by a wide range of things and most of the time they won't be due to cancer. But if it is cancer, early diagnosis can save lives and increase survival and so it's worth getting unusual or persistent changes checked out.



Image: KamranAydinov/Freepik

For more information go to nhs.uk/cancersymptoms

“I know my early diagnosis and treatment is the reason why I'm still here”



49-year-old Shamilla Mirza found a pea-shaped lump in her breast, so booked an appointment with her GP who referred her to the breast clinic at North Manchester General Hospital for tests.

The mother-of-two was shocked to be diagnosed with breast cancer but says the support of her family gave her the strength to face the disease.

Shamilla had a mastectomy (an operation where breast tissue is removed) and breast reconstruction, followed by chemotherapy treatment. On reflection she says: “I cannot thank the NHS or my family enough for giving me the courage to deal with cancer. I know my early diagnosis and treatment is the reason why I'm still here for my family, particularly my sons Zakir and Zain.”

In 2019, Shamilla unveiled a special park bench in Manchester - marking her recovery from cancer. It salutes the scientists, doctors and nurses who are making game-changing progress in tackling the disease. The inscription on her bench reads: “Shamilla Mirza loved sitting here... and still does thanks to advances in cancer research.”

BE BODY AWARE

Cancer signs and symptoms vary from person to person.

Be body aware – if something doesn't feel right contact your GP practice.

It may be nothing serious, but finding cancer early makes it more treatable and can save lives.

To rule out cancer, your GP may refer you for tests. Whatever the result, the NHS is here for you.

HELP US HELP YOU

CONTACT YOUR GP PRACTICE IF SOMETHING IN YOUR BODY DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT OR YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS.

SOME SYMPTOMS CAN BE HARDER TO NOTICE:

- Breathlessness
- Frequent infections
- Unexplained heavy, drenching night sweats
- Unexplained weight loss
- An unusual lump anywhere on the body, like in the neck or armpit
- Unexpected or unexplained bruising or bleeding
- Difficulty swallowing
- Mouth ulcers that don't heal
- White or red patches in the mouth and throat
- Blood in your pee
- Blood in your poo, which may look red or black

For 3 weeks or more:

- A cough or a change to an existing cough
- Changes in the voice such as hoarseness
- Tummy trouble, such as discomfort or bloating
- Feeling tired and unwell and not sure why
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Changes to your bowel habits, such as diarrhoea or constipation, or unusual, pale, or greasy poo
- Unexplained pain or discomfort

It may be nothing serious, but finding cancer early makes it more treatable.

If you reach out to your GP and they have concerns about cancer, they may ask you to do some tests, like go for a chest X-ray or complete a home test kit that looks for hidden traces of blood in your poo or refer you to a specialist.



HM Government



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Find out more at nhs.uk/cancersymptoms