

Early detection is finding cancer in asymptomatic people when it is in the early stages of the disease. Research has proven that specific examinations and tests at regular intervals can detect cancer before a person displays the obvious symptoms of cancer, i.e. asymptomatic people. This is called **screening**.

Early detection can help save lives, reduce suffering and cost of treatment in many cancers

Cancer can be detected early in many parts of the body such as breast, cervix, testicular (testis), colon, prostate, oral cavity and skin. Some of these cancers can be found early by

- i. self examinations (e.g. breast self-examination),
- ii. physical examinations by a health professional (e.g. examinations of the breast, thyroid gland, skin, colon and rectum, testicles, and prostate),
- iii. x-ray (e.g. mammography).
- iv. laboratory tests (e.g. the Pap test, and the prostate-specific antigen or PSA blood test)

There is no one test that can detect many types of cancer. Screening tests differ depending on the part of the body you are testing. The most effective method can be a single test (e.g. Pap smear for cancer of the cervix) or a combination of two or more tests such as mammography, clinical breast examination by a health professional, and breast self-examination for breast cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society:

"The 5-year relative survival rate for people with cancers for which the ACS has specific early detection recommendations (breast, colon, rectum, cervix, prostate, testis, oral cavity, and skin) is about 82%. The 5-year survival rate is defined as the percentage of people alive at least five years after diagnosis of cancer. The 5-year relative survival rate calculation excludes people who die of other causes. Both rates include people regardless of the type of treatment, if any, they receive. The outlook for survival for people with these cancers is greatly improved by early detection. In fact, if all Americans had early detection testing according to ACS recommendations, the 5-year relative survival rate for people with these cancers would increase to about 95%."

Many Malaysians are dying from cancer because the cancer is found in late stages. This is especially true with breast and cervical cancer. With early detection, breast cancer can be found in Stage 1 (lump < 2cm) instead of the current scenario where the cancer is only detected in late Stage II and III when the lump is > 4cm!!! A simple breast examination can save lives. Learn about the different ways to detect cancer early.

'Be Aware. Get Educated. Early Detection Saves Lives'