

YOUR GUIDE TO CANCER TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

# CANCER FOCUS

WITH DR. SHARMIN



## WHEN CANCER RETURNS

DEALING WITH RECURRENCE

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## IS A CANCER RELAPSE WORRYING YOU?

A relapse or recurrence is cancer that goes away and comes back. It can be very difficult to live with the fact that your cancer may come back. In this edition of Cancer Focus, we are going to know more about recurrence, what causes it, how to cope with it and how we can prevent it.

**Let's learn more about recurrence.**



# WHAT IS CANCER RECURRENCE?

## WHY CANCER MIGHT COME BACK?

Cancer that goes away and comes back is called recurrence or relapse of cancer. It happens because despite the best efforts to remove cancer cells, some cells are left behind. It is these cells that grow to form cancer again. At times, cells may become dormant or enter into a sleeping mode, only to reactivate later.

Recurrence is of three types: **Local** is when recurrence occurs at the same place where it first originated, **regional** when it occurs in the adjoining areas, i.e., in the vicinity, and **distant** when recurrence occurs in distant locations, i.e., far from the original site.

### Cancer coming back after surgery is because:

- Some cancer cells were left behind during the operation, or
- some cancer cells had already broken away from the primary cancer but were too small to see (micrometastases).

Surgeons do their best to remove all of the cancer during surgery. But it is always possible to leave behind a small group of cancer cells. For this reason your surgeon may recommend more treatment like chemotherapy, radiation therapy, hormone therapy, or a targeted cancer therapy, if they feel that there is a risk of cancer coming back. Cancer can come back after chemotherapy or radiotherapy because the treatment didn't destroy all the cancer cells. This is one of the major reasons why the approach in cancer treatment is **multi-modal, or multi-disciplinary**, to prevent cancer from coming back.

## What is the difference between Recurrence and Progression?

Recurrence is cancer that goes away and comes back. Progression is cancer that worsens or spreads to other areas of body. Progression is also when cancer comes back quickly and becomes resistant to treatment.

Recurrence may come multiple times. It can happen once, twice or thrice, and this might sound scary. But many people live with recurrence with the right treatment, and for them cancer is like any other chronic illness such as diabetes or heart disease.

## How is a Cancer Recurrence Diagnosed?

A recurrence is diagnosed the same way as cancer is diagnosed. Your doctor might suspect you for recurrence if you start to develop certain signs and symptoms, or based on certain tests.

Look out for the following symptoms if you are suspecting a recurrence:

- Return of the previous cancer symptoms when first diagnosed, eg. a lump or swelling where your cancer first started
- New or unusual pain that is not going away
- Easy bleeding or unexplained bruising
- Weight loss without trying
- A rash or allergic reaction, such as swelling, itching, wheezing
- Chills, fevers
- Frequent headaches
- Shortness of breath
- Bloody stools, or blood in urine
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, or trouble swallowing
- A cough that doesn't go away

**Any unusual sign or symptom that's persistent, growing and not going away needs to be shown to your doctor.**

*It may be possible you might be having some other problem just like anyone else, like a flu, infection, arthritis, heart problem. It is best you speak with your doctor to find the cause of your problem.*



## Ways to Cope with a Cancer Recurrence

A recurrence in cancer brings back some of the emotions, you experienced when first diagnosed with cancer. There might be shock of having cancer come back, when you assumed it was gone. This can cause distress, self-doubt, anxiety, fear and anger. You may doubt your choice of treatment, or the lifestyle choices you made all this while. You may be angry with your doctor for not being able to stop the cancer from coming back. All these feeling and emotions are normal. However, you need not look back. Instead, focus on your current situation and what you need to do now. Here are a few tips to dealing with a recurrence better:

1. Understand the fact that you know more now. Knowing more about cancer and the treatment options can help to reduce your anxiety.
2. Since you have done this before, you know what's best for you. You can draw from your experiences to plan ahead. Use coping mechanisms that you used earlier.
3. Speak with your doctor, your friend, or a family member, who you know provides good emotional support.
4. Seeking a second opinion may help you to better understand your treatment choices.

It is normal to experience emotional distress after a diagnosis of cancer recurrence. However, if the distress is long-lasting or starts to interfere with your daily activities, you may seek help. Counseling is a way to cope with difficult feelings. Another good way is to join a support group or online community to share your experiences and feelings with others in the same situation.







## WAYS TO PREVENT CANCER FROM COMING BACK

**Prevention of recurrence works the same way as preventing cancer in the first place.**

Cancer treatments mostly have 2 goals-to kill the cancer, and to prevent it from coming back. However, medical treatments are not the only way to prevent recurrence. There is growing evidence that your health habits, such as the foods you eat, or don't eat and the amount of exercise you get after your treatment is over, can also help cancer from coming back. Some of these strategies work at reducing your chances of recurrence and that too without the ill effects of treatments.

There is growing evidence that maintaining a healthy weight through diet and exercise can prevent cancer and also its recurrence. Quitting smoking and alcohol, and removing wrong foods like processed meats, excessive sugars, oils rich in saturated fats, red meat, processed meats, are good ways to prevent recurrence. Eating foods rich in fruits and vegetables, around the entire color spectrum, whole grains, healthy oils, are additional ways to reduce cancer risk.

**Reducing stress is as important as getting the right treatment, eating the right foods or exercising.**

Try reducing stress through regular exercise, meditation, or pursuing hobbies or activities that relax and fulfill you. You may not be able to eliminate stress from your life but you can always learn to manage it better.



**DR. SHARMIN YAQIN**

Cancer Immunotherapist  
The Denvax Clinics

Hi Friends,

Most women and men who are diagnosed with cancer usually focus on treatments to destroy the cancer. Most do not consider to make changes in their lifestyle to prevent cancer from coming back. There is growing evidence that maintaining a healthy weight through diet and exercise can prevent cancer, and also its recurrence. Preventing recurrence works pretty much the same way as preventing cancer in the first place. Eating healthy, exercising and managing stress are great tools for not only managing cancer and its recurrence, but also other chronic lifestyle diseases. And that too without the side effects!

There's a rising tide of chronic lifestyle diseases including diabetes, obesity, heart disease, lung disease, digestive disorders and cancer. According to WHO, prevention is the only way forward in bringing about control. Being overweight, obese, stressed and physically inactive is contributing to a large number of illnesses and mortality, globally. Other factors contributing to these illnesses include tobacco use, alcohol, lack of healthy nutrition, infections, pollution and radiation exposures. Together, these factors are giving rise to numerous lifestyle illnesses that are contributing to approximately 72% of deaths, globally.

Following our tradition of simple living and eating is what most of us need in today's times. What we eat or don't eat, how much we exercise and how much stress we have in our life determines a large number of chronic illnesses. Stress is a big part of our life, and most of us are not managing it well. We can not eliminate stress from our life, but there's much we can do to manage it.

Keep in mind, a large number of cancer cases are preventable.  
Yours,

**Dr. Sharmin Yaqin**

Director,  
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# THE DENVAX CANCER THERAPY



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

BUILDING  
**16 YEARS**  
OF TRUST

FROM PATIENTS ALL  
AROUND THE WORLD

Dear Friends,

Recurrence of cancer is not a rule. Yet, a lot of cancers relapse. Cancers getting right treatment at the right stage, show lesser chances of relapse and disease progression.

Quite often, a delay in treatment leads to entering into a phase of relapse, or disease progression and then the treatment options also narrow down. Immunotherapy is a good way to prevent relapse. However, it works best when the patient is in a phase of remission. Remission is when there are no obvious evidences of disease.

Most often patients do not receive any treatment during this "golden period" of disease remission. Most doctors advise patients in remission to look out for cancer signs and symptoms, and many times, there's a disease progression, without any indications. Therefore, it is crucial to not leave this period. Getting a treatment at this stage especially one that targets the micrometastasis, is crucial to ward off the disease. In fact, it is a good way to delay disease recurrence and progression.

Remember, cancer dynamics change every now and then, and cancer finds ways to escape treatments. This is the reason cancers are best treated using a multidisciplinary approach. Additionally, look after your health, weight and lifestyle during the period of remission, to prevent cancer from coming back. Wishing you the best of health and happiness.

**Dr. Jamal A. Khan**

Director, The Denvax Clinics & Optimum Therapeutics Pvt. Ltd.





## DENVAX AND CANCER RELAPSE

### DENVAX HELPS TO PREVENT RELAPSE & RECURRENCE IN CANCER

A cancer relapse occurs because in spite of the best efforts to get rid of cancer, some cancer cells are left behind. These cancer cells remain dormant for a period of time, but eventually they continue to multiply resulting in the recurrence or relapse.

Denvax targets the disseminated cancer cells responsible for the recurrence and relapse of cancer in treated patients. To prevent cancer from coming back, our observation of 16 years suggests taking Denvax treatment at the right stage of cancer, when tumor load is minimal. Patients taking treatment soon after surgery and chemotherapy are best candidates to Denvax receive the therapy. Denvax not only prevents recurrence but also delays disease progression, by killing the residual cells responsible for cancer progression.

**The best candidates to receive Denvax are:**

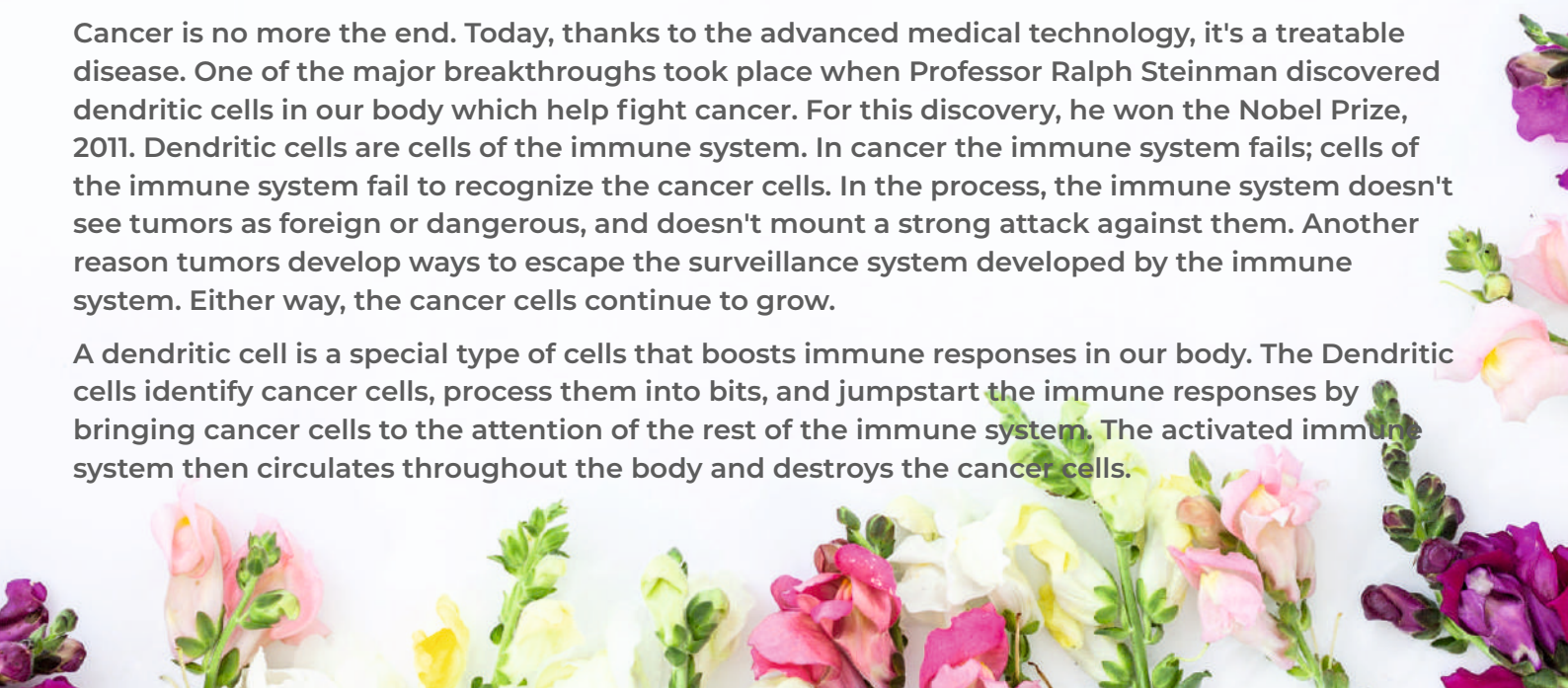
- Early stage cancer patients
- Those who have undergone a recent surgery
- Patients who are in a phase of remission

The dendritic cells given in phase of remission or when the tumor load is minimal, work at killing the micro-metastatic cells giving patients freedom from recurrence.

### How do Dendritic cells Prevent Relapse in Cancer?

Cancer is no more the end. Today, thanks to the advanced medical technology, it's a treatable disease. One of the major breakthroughs took place when Professor Ralph Steinman discovered dendritic cells in our body which help fight cancer. For this discovery, he won the Nobel Prize, 2011. Dendritic cells are cells of the immune system. In cancer the immune system fails; cells of the immune system fail to recognize the cancer cells. In the process, the immune system doesn't see tumors as foreign or dangerous, and doesn't mount a strong attack against them. Another reason tumors develop ways to escape the surveillance system developed by the immune system. Either way, the cancer cells continue to grow.

A dendritic cell is a special type of cells that boosts immune responses in our body. The Dendritic cells identify cancer cells, process them into bits, and jumpstart the immune responses by bringing cancer cells to the attention of the rest of the immune system. The activated immune system then circulates throughout the body and destroys the cancer cells.





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