

WHAT TO EXPECT

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR EMPLOYEE HAS CANCER

A cancer diagnosis is disturbing. In addition to health worries, there are concerns about how treatment will affect the work environment for all. The best thing you can do is educate yourself. We've all heard about cancer, but that doesn't mean we understand exactly what it is.

WHAT IS CANCER?

The term "cancer" covers a group of more than 100 different diseases. They are grouped together because they all stem from the same cause; cancer begins when one or more of our basic cells starts dividing and forming new cells at an unstoppable pace.

WHAT IS A TUMOR?

Tumors are formed when enough of these extra cells have formed to create a mass of tissue.

ARE TUMORS ALWAYS CANCEROUS?

No. Tumors are either benign or malignant. In a benign — or non-cancerous — tumor, the cells contained within haven't spread outside of the tumor. In most cases, a benign tumor can be removed.

With malignant — or cancerous — tumors, the cells have spread outside the tumor and, depending on the type and severity of the cancer, have begun to wreak havoc on surrounding organs and/or body tissue. With some cancers, such as leukemia, the cells spread through the blood, posing a threat to everything in their path.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

Today's cancer is far different from a generation ago. It's no longer the "c" word, talked about only in hushed tones. The more you know about it, the better. There are hundreds of cancer-related support and informational organizations throughout the country. Here are some of the top resources we recommend for learning more:

- American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org)
- National Cancer Institute (www.cancer.gov)

WHAT TO REMEMBER

Obtaining a definitive diagnosis and treatment plan can often take days or weeks. Patients may need to wait for test results, undergo repeat tests or schedule appointments with several specialists, all of which can increase his or her anxiety. Understanding that the time frames for common diagnostic tests, treatments and expected recovery times are unpredictable or can be prolonged, can help everyone better manage this difficult period.