

NATIVE HAWAIIAN CANCER FACT SHEET

Q: What is cancer?

A: Cancer is a disease that begins if new cells, the body's basic building materials, grow when the body does not need them to, or when old cells do not die when they should. These "extra" cells build up and form a lump called a tumor. A tumor can grow if it is not treated. There are two types of tumors. One causes cancer (malignant tumor) and the other does not (benign tumor).

Q: How is cancer treated?

A: There are treatment options for different cancers including: surgery to remove the cancer, radiation therapy to burn the cancer cells, and chemotherapy to poison the cancer cells with drugs. Other methods include drug therapy that stops the production of hormones (that promote cancer), or the removal of organs that produce hormones, microbiology (angiogenesis) to block continued growth of cancer cells, biological therapy which stimulates the immune system to help patients resist the side effects of cancer treatment, and other types of therapy.

Q: How can cancer be prevented?

A: People can lower their chances of getting cancer by choosing foods with less fat, eating more vegetables, fruits and whole grains, and not smoking or chewing tobacco. Regular exercise, weight control, and a healthy lifestyle can help prevent cancer. People can also protect themselves by getting regular checkups and screenings to find cancer early, when it is most curable. This is especially important for people with a family history of cancer.

Q: Is cancer a death sentence?

A: NO. Cancer treatments are getting better and better and many Hawaiians who get treatment while the cancer is in early stages of growth may have a normal life span. Cancer is gradually becoming more of a "chronic" disease, like diabetes, rather than a cause of death.

Select Facts from Hawai'i Cancer Facts & Figures 2010

- Each year, about 6,000 men and women in Hawai'i are diagnosed with cancer, and more than 2,000 die from the disease.
- Native Hawaiian men and women have the highest cancer mortality rates.
- Native Hawaiian men and women have the highest lung cancer incidence and mortality rates.

Native Hawaiian Women

- Have the highest cancer incidence rates
- Have the highest breast cancer incidence and mortality rates
- Most frequently diagnosed with breast cancer, followed by lung cancer, and corpus uteri cancer
- The leading cause of cancer death is lung cancer, followed by breast cancer and pancreatic cancer.

Native Hawaiian Men

- Most frequently diagnosed with prostate cancer, followed by lung cancer, and colorectal cancer
- The leading cause of cancer death is lung cancer, followed by colorectal cancer, and prostate cancer.



'IMI HALE

Native Hawaiian Cancer Network

894 Queen Street • Honolulu, HI 96813

www.imihale.org • (808) 526-1700

NATIVE HAWAIIAN CANCER FACT SHEET

Q: Why are some groups at higher risk for getting cancer?

A: Cancer continues to increase among Native Hawaiian (NH), American Indian, and Alaska Native populations in the U.S. and Canada. Cancer is usually a disease of people over the age of 40, and a person's risk for cancer increases as he or she grows older. Most cancers in Hawai'i (75% of the 6,000 new cases of cancer each year) occur in people aged 55 years and older. Cancer can be caused by a variety of external, internal, and lifestyle factors. Be aware that many types of cancers do not have noticeable symptoms. This is one reason why it is very important to take part in regular cancer screenings. People are at greatest risk for developing cancer if they smoke, drink an average of 2 or more alcoholic drinks daily, do not get daily physical activity, or eat a lot of fast food or high fat foods.

Q: What types of cancers do Hawaiians get most often?

A: The most common types of cancer for Hawaiian men are cancer of the lung, colon and rectum, and prostate. The most common cancers among Hawaiian women are cancers of the lung, breast, and corpus uteri. Nearly 90% of all lung cancer deaths can be linked to tobacco use, and about 1 in 5 Hawaiians smoke tobacco everyday, the highest percentage among the five major ethnic groups in Hawai'i.

Q: How serious is cancer in the NH population?

A: Native Hawaiians have the highest cancer mortality rates among the five major ethnic groups in Hawai'i. Cancer is the first leading cause of death for Hawaiian women, and the second leading cause of death for Hawaiian men.

Q: Where can I get more general facts about cancer?

A: There are several websites if you have access to the internet:

- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org
- Hawai'i State Department of Health: www.state.hi.us/doh/
- Intercultural Cancer Council: www.iccnetwork.org/cancerfacts/
- National Cancer Institute: www.cancer.gov
- The Smoking Quitline, NCI: www.smokefree.gov

Source: Hawai'i Cancer Facts & Figures, 2010

A listing of some Hawai'i cancer support groups.

Queen's Cancer Center

Breast Cancer Support Group (808) 537-7353
Head & Neck Cancer Support Group (808) 545-8777
Lung Cancer Support Group (808) 545-8777

Castle Medical Center

Cancer Support Group (808) 263-5400
Caregiver's Support Group (808) 247-2828

Straub Clinic and Hospital

Cancer Support Group (808) 522-4575

Kapiolani Medical Center

Childhood Cancer Connection (808) 983-6100
OR
(808) 224-0147
Ovarian Cancer Support Group (808) 527-2588

Pali Momi Medical Center

Prostate Cancer Support Group (808) 486-8420

Hui Mālama Ōla Nā 'Oiwi

Cancer Support Group (808) 969-9220

Hui No Ke Ola Pono

Prostate Support Group, Wailuku (808) 244-5553
Reach for Recovery 1:1 Breast Cancer Support Group, Wailuku (808) 244-5553

Na Pu'uwai

Molokai General Hospital (808) 553-5331
Molokai American Cancer Society (808) 553-5154

Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Center

Cancer support groups (808) 697-3300 ext 3443