

A Brief Description and Diagnosis of Cancer during Pregnancy

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Description

Cancer during pregnancy is extremely rare. Cancer rarely affects the developing fetus. Cancer during pregnancy is more difficult to identify and cure when it occurs. This is because cancer testing and treatments might harm the fetus, so each stage of your medical care will be carefully monitored. It is critical to collaborate with a medical team that has expertise in treating cancer during pregnancy. Being diagnosed with cancer or beginning cancer treatment while pregnant may be extremely stressful and daunting. Throughout this journey, it is critical to communicate your feelings to your health care team so that they can assist you in finding the assistance you require. This might include an in-person or online support group for other pregnant women who have or have had cancer.

Breast cancer is the most prevalent type of cancer discovered during pregnancy. It affects around one in every 3,000 pregnant women. Other malignancies that are more prevalent during pregnancy are also more common in younger adults who are not pregnant, such as:

- Cervical cancer
- Gestational trophoblastic disease
- Hodgkin lymphoma
- Melanoma
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Thyroid cancer

When a woman is pregnant, it might be more difficult to diagnose cancer. This is due to the fact that some cancer symptoms, such as bloating, migraines, or rectal bleeding, are also frequent during pregnancy. During pregnancy, breasts normally grow bigger and alter texture, and these changes may look normal. This indicates that cancer-related alterations in pregnant women may be observed later and, as a result, identified later than in non-pregnant women. Pregnancy can also disclose malignancy in rare cases.

A Pap test performed as part of regular prenatal care, for example, can detect cervical cancer, while an ultrasound performed during pregnancy can detect ovarian cancer. Some of the tests used by doctors to detect cancer are safe during pregnancy and for the fetus.

Others might be hazardous. Always discuss each suggested test with health care team and inform the testing professionals that are pregnant.

The following are some of the most often utilized tests in cancer diagnosis:

X-ray: According to study, the amount of radiation in diagnostic x-rays is too low to damage the embryo. A shield is utilized to protect the abdomen during x-rays whenever feasible.

CT or CAT scans: CT scans are similar to x-rays but significantly more precise due to the use of more radiation. They are capable of detecting cancer or demonstrating its spread. During pregnancy, CT scans of the head and chest are generally safe. Because they do not expose the fetus to direct radiation, they are considered safe.

A shield should be utilized to protect a pregnant woman's abdomen during all CT scans if at all possible. CT scans of the abdomen or pelvis should be performed only when all other options have been exhausted. Discuss the need for this scan as well as potential hazards with your healthcare team.

Cancer therapy during pregnancy necessitates the collaboration of a diverse team of medical and health care experts. This includes oncologists, who treat cancer, and high-risk obstetricians. An obstetrician, sometimes known as an OB, is a doctor who treats women during and after pregnancy. Oncologists and obstetricians will discuss and analyses the best treatment choices as well as any potential dangers. This will include considering a variety of criteria. The stage of your pregnancy, as well as the kind, size, and stage of the malignancy, is all crucial considerations.

Your doctors will also discuss preferences and make cancer treatment selections. They will continuously follow you during therapy to ensure the wellbeing. Sometimes doctors may recommend delaying or avoiding certain treatments during pregnancy. For example: Some cancer therapies are more likely to damage a fetus during the first three months of pregnancy.

As a result, doctors may advise to postpone therapy until the second or third trimester. Some therapies can be harmful to the fetus at any stage of pregnancy. Doctors strive to delay the use of these medications until the baby is delivered. Radiation therapy,

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for example, is a potent treatment that employs high-energy x-rays to eliminate cancer cells. Depending on the radiation dose and which portion of the body needs treatment, there may be dangers to the foetus throughout pregnancy. When cancer is discovered later in pregnancy, doctors may advise commencing therapy after the baby is born. Doctors may advise postponing treatment for certain forms of cancer, such as early-stage cervical cancer, until after the baby is delivered.

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