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Health Matters: Metastasize

Triston Sanders - Medical Anchor

Of the estimated 570,000 people who will die of cancer this year, almost all will have metastasis. Metastatic cancer is cancer that has spread from the part of the body where it started to other parts of the body.

In this Health Matters we take a look at how cancer can spread through this process and meet a local survivor to give hope to others who are fighting it.

Sherwood Dean won his battle against prostate cancer in 1994 only to discover later that his cancer had metastasized to other areas of his body.

Sherwood says, "And the cancer got into my bones is what happened, and my ribs."

Getting as much information as possible from a variety of sources and learning that early detection saves lives is one of the most important issues for all cancer patients.

Dr. David Cho, radiation oncologist, says, "If the cancer is caught very, very early and dealt with at the local level, at the location of the origin, then the risks of metastasis [is] low."

Understanding terms like metastasis, if there is a change in the status of the cancer is crucial for everyone involved. Cancer metastasizes through your lymphatic system or the blood system.

"The cancer cells spread through the blood system and the cancer cells get lodged in the blood system, using the blood system almost like a river."

Because of the enhancement in oncology treatments, many forms of metastasis that could not be treated in the past are being managed successfully today.

"I've always been told the sooner you get that radiation and often, the better it is."

And with technology and other medication advancements, people like Sherwood are successfully fighting their disease even when metastasis occurs.

The most common sites of metastasis from solid tumors are the lungs, bones, liver and brain.

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