



Diagnosis

Emotional Impact

Treatment/Side Effects

Survivorship

Patient Stories

An Older Person's Disease

In 2002, when Fighting Chance began providing free counseling to East End cancer patients, most of our patients were senior citizens. This was in line with many academic studies indicating about 65% of all new U.S. cancer cases were diagnosed among Americans over 65. It was generally understood that cancer was an “older person’s disease.”

What’s “Early Onset Cancer?”

But, during the past 10 years or so, the patient profile has been changing with a spike in new cancer cases among millennials, mainly in the 25 to 45 age-bracket. These cases are known as “early onset” cancer and recent statistics are sobering. According to a recent European study the rate of increase in new cancer cases from 1990 to 2020 was:

Age Bracket	Increase
Over 70	9%
50 to 74	13%
25 to 50	22%

What’s the Cause?

The increase in early onset cases has only become noticeable in recent years and so the science to discover the cause is still embryonic.

One hypothesis is that millennials are one of the first generations to be fed a steady diet of processed foods and saturated fat. We now know that these have cancer-causing properties.



Focus On Colon Cancer

The most dramatic increase in cancer cases among millennials is in the colon. This fact received recent national attention when Chadwick Boseman, best known as the star of *The Black Panther*, was diagnosed in 2016 with stage 3 colon cancer and died 4 years later at age 43.

Breast Cancer

Here, on the East End, early onset breast cancer is becoming noticeably more prevalent. A recent article in the local press focused on several young local women who’ve been diagnosed with breast cancer and have created a support and advocacy group called “Warriors of

the East End.” The article quoted a local physician who said he sees many young breast cancer patients each day - - the youngest, only 26. Accordingly, pressure is building to lower the age for mammograms.

Psychological / Emotional Impact

When a millennial gets cancer - - and faces the prospect of death - - it’s normal to feel that they may miss out on the “prime of their life.” They may harbor a related sentiment which is “I’m too young to have cancer.”

Fighting Chance Can Help

We see these issues because millennials are among those who seek free cancer counseling from our clinic in Sag Harbor. Our clinical counselors - - who are accredited and insured - - can help a patient better cope with how cancer has compromised their sense of well being.

Fighting Chance has offices in
Sag Harbor and at the
Phillips Family Cancer Center
in Southampton.

For more details, or information
please call 631.725.4646

Visit our website at
www.fightingchance.org