



GEM  
CANCER CENTRE  
A UNIT OF GEM HOSPITAL GROUP, COIMBATORE

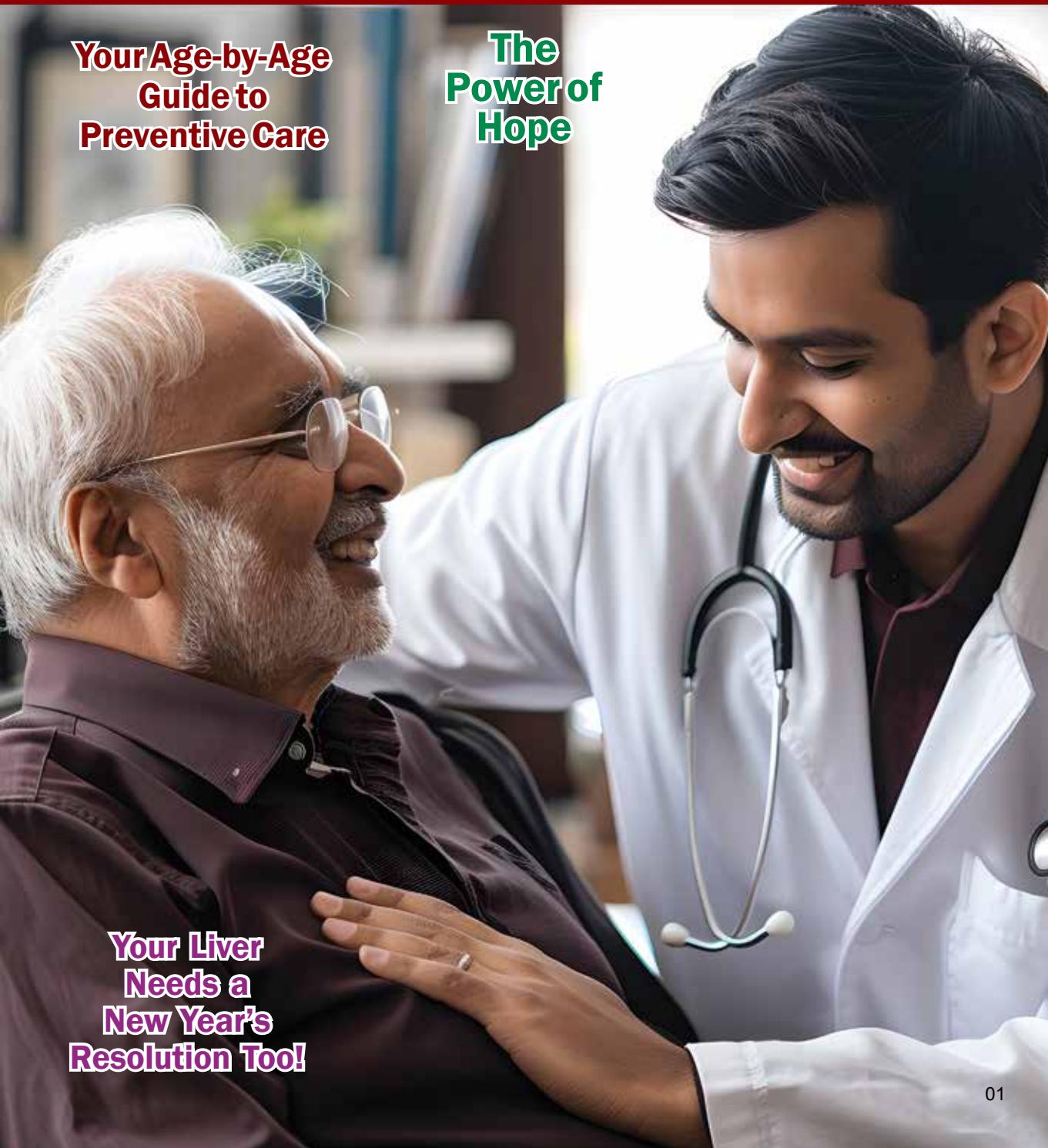
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# GEMify Health

Built on Evidence. Driven by Innovation. Powered by GEM Hospital

**Your Age-by-Age  
Guide to  
Preventive Care**

**The  
Power of  
Hope**



**Your Liver  
Needs a  
New Year's  
Resolution Too!**

# Cancerக்கு நல்ல Answer

Coimbatore's 1<sup>st</sup> Stand-Alone  
Multi-Cancer Care Hospital

We're proud to launch the city's first stand-alone, fully equipped multi-cancer care hospital from the house of Gem Hospital, Asia's biggest name in gastro and laparoscopic brilliance.

This isn't just another building with fancy machines. It's a war room.

"Cancerku Nalla Answer" is a promise that our competent expertise and well-equipped modern machinery and technology, will arm you in our fight against cancer.



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**CANCER CENTRE**

A UNIT OF GEM HOSPITAL GROUP, COIMBATORE



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**GEM  
Hospital's  
Health &  
Wellness  
Magazine**

**GEM  
Hospitals**

Leading hospital  
specializing in minimally  
invasive laparoscopic and  
robotic surgeries with  
minimal pain and blood loss



Specialty hospital  
providing world - class  
treatment for gastric and  
digestive disorders



Hospital performing organ  
transplant surgeries with  
modern facilities



Hospital featuring a  
specialized oncology  
surgical department



# Wellness Wisdom

For decades, a cancer diagnosis has been synonymous with fear and uncertainty. Today, however, profound advancements in oncology are ushering in a new era of hope for patients and their families.

Cancer is partly a biological reality of our evolutionary heritage, but it's also significantly influenced by external factors. Our environment and lifestyle choices play a major role in its development. Healthy eating, regular physical activity, and avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol use are powerful tools for cancer prevention. Research shows that a significant proportion of cancers can be prevented through these lifestyle changes, empowering each of us to take control of our health.

The surgical and technological advancements in oncology are truly revolutionary. We have moved from traditional open surgery to laparoscopic procedures, and now to the forefront of robotic surgery. These innovations, when combined with advanced imaging systems, enable us to perform complex surgeries, achieving good outcomes even in some advanced-stage cancers that were once considered inoperable. This integrated

approach has proven successful in colorectal, gastric, liver, and gynecological cancers, among others.

Robotic systems eliminate the natural tremor of the human hand, translating the surgeon's movements with extraordinary precision. The three-dimensional magnified view and stable operating field offer a clearer view of complex anatomical regions, enabling surgeons to precisely target cancerous tissue while minimizing injury to critical structures.



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ஜெம் நாலம் (Gem Nalam) - Tamil Edition

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We are now in an era where human expertise and empathy are enhanced by machine precision and advanced visualization. Technology does not replace doctors - it empowers them. This partnership between skilled clinicians and sophisticated tools is reshaping the future of medicine.

Perhaps most importantly, our philosophy of care has evolved. We now view treatment as a partnership. Instead of overwhelming patients with harsh treatments, we identify therapies that are both effective and tolerable. Treatment is broken into manageable sessions, and doctors and patients make decisions together, weighing risks, benefits, and personal values.

These advances represent a fundamental shift toward a more precise, collaborative, and humane approach to cancer care. From re-examining cancer development to placing the patient's needs and dignity at the center, we have entered a new era of healing.

As technology and compassion continue to converge, the possibilities for better outcomes and improved patient experiences are expanding. Your health and well-being remain our primary focus throughout this journey. And always remember: early detection and timely treatment remain the keys to success.

With warm regards,  
**Dr. C. Palanivelu**  
Chairman, GEM Hospital  
[www.gemhospitals.com](http://www.gemhospitals.com)



# GEMify Health

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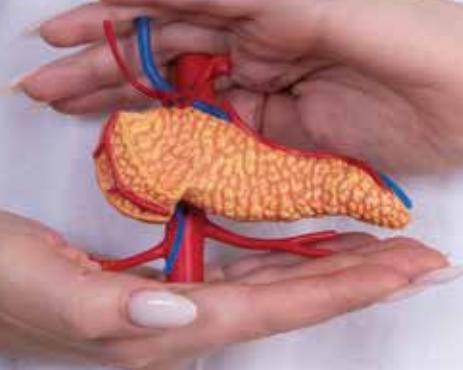
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Medical Disclaimer: The information in this publication has been carefully prepared in consultation with medical experts. However, individual medical needs vary based on health status, environment, age, and lifestyle factors. Readers are advised to consult qualified healthcare professionals before implementing any treatment or health practices mentioned herein.



# Understanding Diabetes and the Pancreas

Everyone knows that diabetes involves insulin problems. However, many people don't realize that insulin is produced by the pancreas. How are the pancreas and diabetes connected? How do the three types differ? Let's understand this clearly.

## What Is the Pancreas?

The pancreas is a vital organ located behind your stomach, near the intestines. It performs

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two crucial functions: producing digestive enzymes that break down fats, proteins, and carbohydrates, and producing hormones—primarily insulin and glucagon—that control blood sugar.

### How Insulin Works: The Key Analogy

The pancreas contains special islet cells that produce insulin. Think of insulin as a key: When you eat, food becomes glucose (sugar) in your bloodstream. Glucose cannot enter cells alone. Insulin arrives and 'unlocks the door,' allowing glucose to enter and convert to energy. Without sufficient insulin, glucose accumulates in the blood—this is diabetes.

### Type 1 Diabetes: The Autoimmune Attack

The body's immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. This autoimmune condition primarily affects children and young adults, appearing suddenly. Symptoms include extreme thirst, frequent urination, weight loss despite eating well, and severe fatigue. Daily insulin injections are mandatory for life since the pancreas produces little or no insulin.

### Type 2 Diabetes: The Jammed Lock

The pancreas still produces insulin, but two problems occur: insufficient insulin production and insulin resistance—cells don't respond properly to insulin, like a jammed lock. Typically affecting adults over 40 (though increasingly seen in younger people), risk factors include excess abdominal weight, sedentary lifestyle, poor diet, and family history. Symptoms develop slowly: increased

thirst, frequent urination, slow-healing wounds, blurred vision, and numbness in hands and feet. Treatment begins with diet and exercise, progresses to oral medications like metformin, and may eventually require insulin.

### Type 3c Diabetes: The Overlooked Type

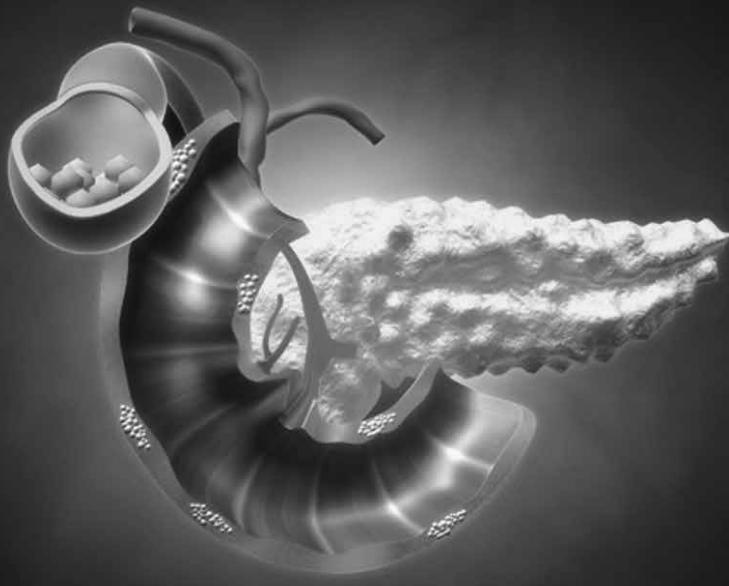
This often-misunderstood form occurs when the pancreas itself is damaged, affecting both its functions: reduced insulin production (causing diabetes) and reduced digestive enzyme



production (causing digestive problems). Studies suggest Type 3c accounts for 5-10% of all diabetes cases but is frequently misdiagnosed as Type 2.

Common causes include chronic pancreatitis (accounting for approximately 79% of cases, often from alcohol, gallstones, or genetic factors), pancreatic cancer, pancreatic surgery, cystic fibrosis, and hemochromatosis.

Unique symptoms combine diabetes signs with digestive distress: abdominal bloating, fatty



stools (oily, pale, floating), weight loss, abdominal pain after eating, and vitamin deficiencies.

Complex treatment addresses both issues.

For blood sugar: oral medications initially, often progressing to insulin with frequent monitoring.

For digestion: pancreatic enzyme replacement capsules with meals, vitamin supplements (A, D, E, K), low-fat diet, and small frequent meals.

Challenges include wide blood sugar fluctuations (both very high and low due to reduced glucagon production), nutritional deficiencies, and ongoing digestive discomfort.

Quick Comparison			
Feature	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3c
Cause	Autoimmune attack	Insulin resistance	Pancreatic damage
Typical Age	Children, youth	Adults (40+)	Any age
Digestive Issues	No	No	Yes
Treatment	Insulin only	Diet, meds, insulin	Insulin + enzymes

### Warning Signs

#### -See Your Doctor Immediately

- Sudden weight loss
- Excessive thirst and frequent urination
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Numbness or tingling in hands and feet
- Slow-healing wounds
- Fatty stools and abdominal bloating (suspect Type 3c)

The pancreas plays a central role in both

digestion and blood sugar regulation. Understanding all three types of diabetes—especially the often-overlooked Type 3c—leads to proper diagnosis and effective treatment. Early detection, appropriate investigations, and proper management are essential for living well with diabetes.



## Essential Health Screenings After Age 30

Once you cross 30, your body begins subtle changes that make preventive health screenings increasingly important.

### Ages 30-40: Building Your Baseline

- Complete Blood Count (CBC) - Annually. Screens for anemia, infection, and blood disorders.
- Blood Sugar Testing - Annually. Both fasting glucose and HbA1c to catch prediabetes early.
- Lipid Profile - Annually. Monitors cholesterol and triglycerides for heart disease risk.
- Thyroid Function - Every 2 years. Tests TSH, T3, and T4 levels, especially for women.
- Liver & Kidney Function - Annually. Detects organ dysfunction before symptoms appear.
- Vitamin D & B12 - Annually. Deficiencies are common and easily correctable.
- Blood Pressure - Every 6 months. Hypertension often has no symptoms but serious consequences.
- For Women: Pap Smear - Every 3 years. Screens for cervical cancer, highly preventable when caught early.

### Ages 40-50: Adding Cancer Screenings

Add these critical tests:

- Electrocardiogram (ECG) - Annually.

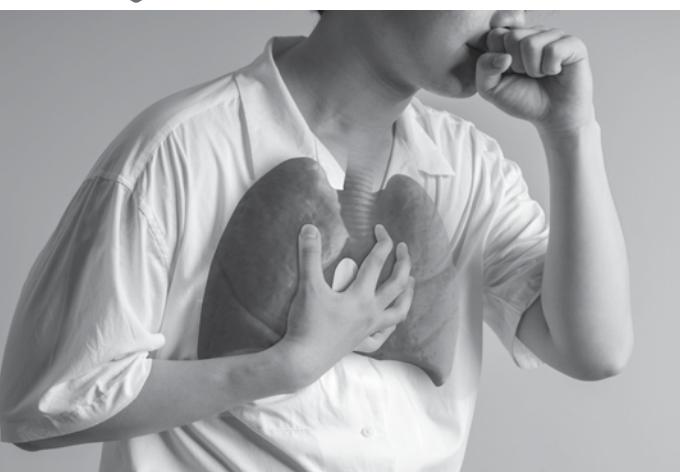
Baseline heart function assessment, crucial as cardiovascular risk increases.

- Comprehensive Eye Exam - Every 2 years. Checks vision, eye pressure (glaucoma), and retinal health.
- For Women: Mammogram - Starting at 40-45, then every 1-2 years. Breast cancer screening saves lives through early detection.
- For Men: PSA Test - Starting at 50 (or 45 if high risk). Discusses prostate cancer screening with your doctor annually.
- Bone Density (DEXA Scan) - As recommended. For women approaching menopause or those with risk factors.

### Age 50 and Beyond: Comprehensive Prevention

Maintain all previous screenings and add:

- Colonoscopy - Starting at 45-50, then every 10 years. The gold standard for colorectal cancer prevention.
- Cardiac Stress Test - As recommended. Evaluates heart function under exertion, especially with cardiac risk factors.
- Bone Density - Every 2 years. Osteoporosis screening becomes critical, especially for women.
- Eye Exam - Annually. Age-related conditions like cataracts and macular degeneration increase.



Ask anyone about the cause of lung cancer, and the answer is immediate: cigarettes. While true, the complete story—from psychological triggers to modern treatments—is far more complex and surprising.

## 1. The 'Stress Relief' Myth

Smoking doesn't calm you down; it stresses you out.

Many smokers reach for cigarettes to cope with anxiety, believing they provide a calming moment. This is a deadly illusion. Nicotine is a stimulant that elevates heart rate and raises blood pressure. The 'relaxation' a smoker feels is actually just relief from withdrawal symptoms from the previous cigarette. It's a vicious cycle: smoking doesn't solve stress—it creates a pattern of temporary relief followed by more anxiety and craving. Recognizing this chemical trap is the first step toward breaking free.

## 2. The Long Road to Recovery

Quitting helps immediately, but risk reduction takes years.

Your body begins healing within hours of your last cigarette. Heart rate and blood pressure start to drop within 20 minutes; within days to weeks, circulation and lung function improve. However, deep cellular recovery is a marathon. Within 10 years of quitting, lung cancer risk can fall to roughly

# 5 Surprising Facts About Lung Cancer

half that of a continuing smoker. The risk may approach that of a never-smoker only after 20 to 30 years, and for heavy smokers it may remain somewhat higher even then. Every single cigarette adds to the burden. The message is clear: the best time to quit was yesterday; the second-best time is now.

## 3. Surgery Isn't What You Imagine

From 'open chest' to 'keyhole.'

The image of lung surgery often conjures invasive procedures, broken ribs, and prolonged recovery. For early-stage cancers, this is outdated. Today's standard for Stage 1 and selected Stage 2 lung cancer is VATS (Video-Assisted Thoracoscopic Surgery)—minimally invasive 'keyhole' technique for the chest. Through small incisions and a camera, surgeons remove tumors with less muscle and rib disruption. Patients usually sit up and start walking within one to two days. Hospital stays are shorter, often just a few days. Many return to light activities within two to four weeks. This approach has transformed a feared ordeal into a manageable procedure.

## 4. Stage 4: No Longer an Immediate Death Sentence

The era of targeted therapy.

Historically, Stage 4 diagnosis carried



a devastating prognosis measured in months. Today, that outlook has improved significantly thanks to precision medicine. Doctors now perform molecular testing on tumor tissue to identify specific genetic changes—such as EGFR mutations or ALK rearrangements—that drive cancer growth. When such 'driver' mutations are present, targeted tablets or injections can control the disease for extended periods while maintaining quality of life. For certain subtypes, median survival can now reach several years, sometimes beyond five to six years at specialist centers. Stage 4 remains serious, but modern medicine offers genuine hope—and for some, the possibility of living with cancer more like a chronic disease.

## 5. Secondhand Smoke: The Invisible Threat

Your choice affects your family.

Smoking is often viewed as a personal choice, but its consequences extend far beyond the individual. Secondhand smoke contains many of the same toxic chemicals and carcinogens as directly inhaled smoke. Non-smokers

## How to Reduce Your Risk of Lung Cancer

- Stop smoking immediately. Every cigarette causes damage; quitting at any age brings health benefits.
- Never smoke at home, in cars, or in enclosed spaces. Secondhand smoke is dangerous, particularly for children.
- Stay smoke-free for the long term. Ten smoke-free years significantly reduce risk; 20+ years bring you closer to never-smoker levels.
- Go for screening if eligible. Low-dose CT screening is recommended for high-risk smokers; early-stage cancers are far easier to treat.
- Ask about modern treatments. For suitable patients, VATS and targeted therapies can greatly improve outcomes and quality of life.

exposed to secondhand smoke have higher risk of lung cancer and heart disease. Children living with smokers have increased rates of respiratory infections, ear infections, and asthma attacks, and may face higher lifetime risk of lung problems. Smoking at home, in cars, or in enclosed spaces is never 'just your habit.' Your decision affects your entire family, especially children.

Lung cancer remains formidable, but knowledge empowers action. Understanding smoking's true impact, the benefits of quitting, and the power of early detection and modern treatments can genuinely save lives. Prevention through cessation is the best defense. Early diagnosis and cutting-edge therapy are the best offense. Your lungs—and your life—are worth protecting. ●

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## GEM Hospital Hosts Landmark 10th Edition of LAPAROSURG 2025



Event Draws 1,500+ Surgeons and Features Launch of Advanced Thoracic Surgery Division.

GEM Hospital, India's premier center for minimally invasive surgery and comprehensive cancer care, has successfully concluded the 10th edition of LAPAROSURG 2025, the region's largest laparoscopic surgery conference. The four-day scientific event, held from November 19–22, not only set a new benchmark for surgical education but also marked a major expansion in cancer care with the launch of a dedicated Thoracic Surgery Division.

### A Global Gathering of Surgical Minds

The conference attracted over 1,500 surgical professionals from India and neighboring nations, serving as a global forum for knowledge exchange. The event featured 10 distinguished international faculty members from seven countries, reinforcing GEM Hospital's reputation as a 'University for Surgeons.'

The comprehensive program included live surgical demonstrations, hands-on training workshops, keynote addresses, and expert-led sessions focusing on advanced laparoscopic and robotic techniques. The event underscored GEM Hospital's dedication to advancing surgical excellence through education, innovation, and collaborative learning.

### Milestone: Inauguration of Thoracic Surgery Division

A major highlight of the conference was the official inauguration of the Thoracic Surgery Division at GEM Cancer Center. The division was inaugurated by Dr. Abhijit Sheth, President of the National Board of Examinations (NBE) and member of the National Medical Commission (NMC), marking a pivotal moment in the expansion of specialized surgical services in the region.



**This state-of-the-art unit is designed to provide holistic care for:**

- Lung Cancer: Utilizing advanced minimally invasive video-assisted (VATS) and robotic approaches.
- Benign Thoracic Conditions: Treating complex chest and lung disorders with precision.

The division aims to significantly reduce recovery times while improving survival rates for thoracic oncology patients.

**Leadership Vision**

Dr. C. Palanivelu, Chairman of GEM Hospital, highlighted the evolution of surgical care:

'We have moved from an era of open surgery to an era of precision. The launch of our specialized Thoracic Surgery Division reflects our mission to integrate innovation with ethical medical practice, ensuring our patients receive world-class care right here in India.'

**Dr. Praveen Raj, Associate Managing Director, added:**

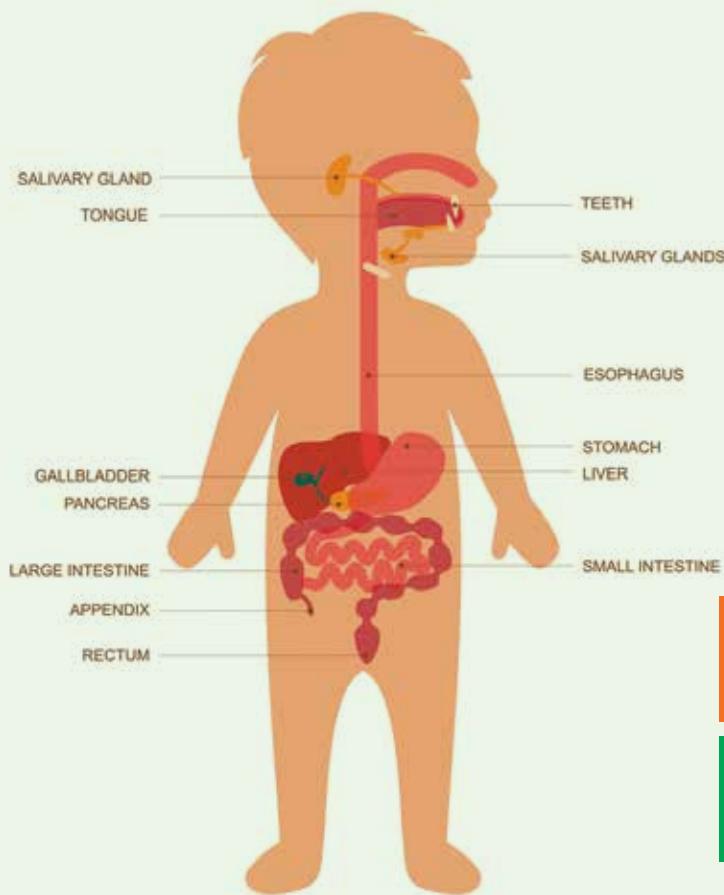
'LAPAROSURG is not just a conference; it is a commitment to the future. By training the next generation of surgeons and simultaneously expanding our own clinical capabilities, we are building a healthier society.'

**Advancing Cancer Care Excellence**

The establishment of the Thoracic Surgery Division represents a significant expansion of comprehensive cancer care services at GEM Cancer Center. It strengthens the hospital's position as a leading institution for advanced surgical treatment and patient care, offering cutting-edge, minimally invasive options that reduce recovery time and improve patient outcomes.

**For more information:**

[www.laparosurg.gemhospitals.com](http://www.laparosurg.gemhospitals.com)



# THE AMAZING JOURNEY OF YOUR FOOD!

Do you know where the idli you ate this morning went? It started an exciting adventure inside your body! Like a roller coaster ride-through dark tunnels, into acid pools, and along twisting pathways! This journey takes 24 to 72 hours. That idli eventually becomes the energy you need to run, play, and think. How does this happen? It's the magic of digestion!

### Your Amazing Body Factory

Imagine you're a tiny scientist with magic glasses that let you see inside your body. What do you see? An incredible 9-meter (30-foot) pathway! Along this pathway, your stomach works like a blender, your small intestine acts as a sponge, and your large intestine functions as a recycling center.

They work all day, all night—even while you sleep! Let's discover the secrets of this amazing body factory... it's a tasty journey!

### What Is Digestion?

Your family chops vegetables in the kitchen, cooks them, and transforms them into delicious food, right? Similarly, your body breaks down the food you eat into tiny pieces and converts it into energy. This is called digestion.

When you run, play, study, or even sleep, your body needs energy. We get this energy from food. But your body can't use a whole idli or banana as-is. It must break it down into microscopic particles. Only then can they mix with your blood and travel to every cell in your body.

## Try This!

Take a biscuit or piece of plain rice and keep it in your mouth for 30 seconds while chewing (don't swallow). What happens? Does it taste sweeter? This is the first step of digestion—the amylase enzyme in saliva is turning starch into sugar!

## Think about it!

The idli you ate this morning—where is it now? Which station is it traveling through?



## The 9-Meter Pathway

Your digestive system is like a long tube. It's about 9 meters (30 feet) long—longer than your classroom! But it doesn't run straight inside you. It folds and coils to fit inside your belly.

### This pathway has several important stations

1. Mouth - Where food's journey begins
2. Esophagus - 25 cm tunnel to your stomach
3. Stomach - The grinding machine
4. Small Intestine - 6 meters long, absorbs nutrients
5. Large Intestine - 1.5 meters long, absorbs water

Besides these, three organs help this journey: the liver, gallbladder, and pancreas.

### Food's Journey—Step by Step

#### Station 1: Mouth (5-30 seconds)

##### 'The Chopping Board'

When you bite a chapati, your 32 teeth start chopping it. At the same time, your tongue mixes the food with saliva. Saliva contains special chemicals called enzymes. They start softening the food.

**Interesting fact:** If you chew a chapati well, it tastes slightly sweet! That's because the amylase

enzyme in saliva converts starch into small sugar particles.

#### Station 2: Esophagus (5-10 seconds)

##### 'The Slide'

When you swallow food, it travels through the esophagus to your stomach. This tube is made of muscles. It squeezes in waves, pushing food downward. This movement is called peristalsis. That's why food reaches your stomach even if you stand on your head! (But please don't eat upside down!)

#### Station 3: Stomach (2-4 hours)

##### 'The Blender'

Your stomach is like a bag containing powerful acid called hydrochloric acid. This acid is very strong—its pH level is 1 to 3! But why doesn't it damage your stomach? Because the stomach's inner wall has a protective mucus layer.

The stomach mixes food thoroughly, grinds it, and turns it into porridge. This porridge is called chyme.

#### Station 4: Small Intestine (3-6 hours)

##### 'The Nutrient Sponge'

This is where the most important work happens! The small intestine is 6 meters long,

# Metal-Melting Acid? Elephant-Sized Appetite? Welcome to Your Stomach!



1. Your stomach acid is so strong it could slowly dissolve some metals over time! But the mucus layer protects you.
2. In your lifetime, you'll eat thousands of kilograms of food-maybe 30,000 kg! That's equal to 6 elephants!
3. If you spread out your small intestine's surface area (with all its folds and villi), it would cover 250-300 square meters-the size of a tennis court!
4. Your stomach has a special door (pyloric sphincter) that opens to send only 3 ml of chyme to the intestine at a time. It's very controlled!
5. You produce enough saliva in a year to fill two bathtubs!

but why is it called 'small'? Because its width is very tiny-only about 3 cm!

The intestine's wall has millions of tiny finger-like projections called villi. These absorb nutrients and mix them into the blood. This is where energy from your chapati, vitamins from fruit, and protein from lentils all enter your bloodstream and travel throughout your body.

## Station 5: Large Intestine (10-50 hours)

### 'The Recycling Center'

Now all the useful nutrients from food have been absorbed. What remains is fiber, water, and waste materials. The large intestine absorbs water from this and converts the rest into stool. Finally, it leaves your body.

### Organs That Help Digestion

These organs don't touch the food, but digestion can't happen without them!

- Liver: Produces bile, which helps break down fat.
- Gallbladder: Stores bile and releases it when you eat fatty food.
- Pancreas: Produces digestive enzymes and insulin hormone, which controls blood sugar.

### Why Is Digestion Important?

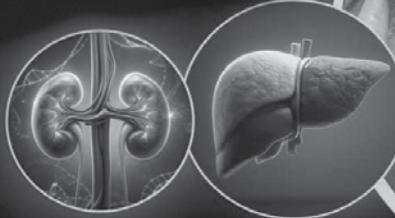
#### The food you eat contains everything your body needs to grow!

- Carbohydrates (chapati, rice) - Energy for running and playing
- Protein (eggs, lentils) - Strengthens muscles
- Fat (ghee, oil) - Brain development and energy
- Vitamins & Minerals (fruits, vegetables) - Overall health
- Fiber (greens, fruits) - Smooth digestion

Without good digestion, these nutrients won't reach your body. Then you'll feel tired and won't grow properly.



# 10 Foods That Protect Your Liver



Your liver is your body's powerhouse. It detoxifies harmful substances and produces bile essential for digestion. The right foods can keep your liver healthy and functioning optimally. The good news? The best medicines for your liver are everyday foods already in your kitchen!

## 10 Liver-Friendly Foods

1. Leafy Greens (Spinach, Fenugreek Leaves)  
- Rich in chlorophyll, which helps neutralize toxins and heavy metals.
2. Turmeric-Curcumin reduces liver inflammation and enhances detoxification enzymes.
3. Garlic - Sulfur compounds activate liver enzymes that flush out toxins from the body.
4. Indian Gooseberry (Amla) - Packed with vitamin C, it's excellent for liver cleansing and protection.
5. Carrots and Beetroot - Loaded with antioxidants that reduce liver fat and improve function.
6. Lentils and Legumes - Plant protein and fiber prevent fat accumulation in the liver.
7. Green Tea and Coffee - Antioxidants reduce liver fat and lower risk of liver disease.
8. Apples, Grapes, and Berries - Polyphenols protect liver cells from damage and inflammation.
9. Whole Grains (Brown Rice, Oats, Millet) - Fiber regulates digestion and prevents fatty liver.
10. Walnuts and Almonds - Omega-3 fatty acids reduce liver inflammation and improve fat metabolism.

## Foods That Harm Your Liver

- Alcohol - The leading cause of liver damage
- Fried Foods (samosas, pakoras, puris) - Accumulate fat in the liver
- Sugar-Rich Foods (gulab jamun, jalebi, soft drinks) - Contribute to fatty liver disease
- Refined Carbohydrates (white rice, refined flour/maida) - Spike blood sugar levels
- Processed Foods (packaged snacks, instant noodles) - Contain harmful additives
- High-Fat Meats - Place extra burden on liver function

## Daily Habits for a Healthy Liver

- Drink cumin water or amla juice daily
- Include turmeric, garlic, and cumin in your meals
- Eat leafy greens 3-4 times per week
- Avoid deep-frying; opt for steaming or boiling instead
- Stay hydrated with at least 8 glasses of water daily
- Limit alcohol consumption or avoid it completely





# Managing Digestive Issues During Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a joyful journey, but many expectant mothers face digestive challenges. Research shows that 70-80% of women experience nausea during the first trimester, and about one-third deal with constipation. Understanding these issues and managing them safely is essential for both mother and baby's well-being.

## Morning Sickness

Despite its name, morning sickness can occur anytime. It typically begins around 6-8 weeks and improves by 18-20 weeks.

**Causes:** Rising pregnancy hormones (hCG and progesterone), heightened sense of smell, and slower gut movement.

## Management Tips

- Eat dry crackers or biscuits before getting out of bed
- Have 5-6 small meals throughout the day instead of 3 large ones
- Try ginger tea, ginger candy, or ginger chews for natural relief
- Avoid oily, fried, and strong-smelling foods
- Sip buttermilk, lemon water, or coconut water between meals

**Red Flag:** Persistent vomiting, inability to keep fluids down, or weight loss may indicate hyperemesis gravidarum (affecting 1%)-seek immediate medical care.



## Constipation

About one-third of pregnant women experience constipation, with highest rates in the second trimester.

**Why:** Progesterone slows digestion, the growing uterus presses on intestines, iron supplements harden stools, and reduced activity contributes.

## Solutions

- Include fiber-rich foods at each meal: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lentils
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water daily
- Move for 30 minutes daily: walking, gentle stretches, prenatal yoga
- Respond promptly when you feel the urge
- Avoid prolonged straining

**Safe Medications:** Never start laxatives on your own. Stool softeners or polyethylene glycol (PEG) may be recommended by your doctor.

## Hemorrhoids

Common in the third trimester, hemorrhoids are swollen veins around the anus. They often improve after delivery.

**Dr. Sai Darshini**  
MS, OG



Causes: Constipation and straining, growing uterus pressure, and hormones relaxing vessel walls.

Symptoms: Bright red blood on toilet paper, itching, burning, discomfort, or painful lumps.

### Relief Measures

- Make constipation prevention your first priority
- Apply cold compresses to reduce swelling
- Take warm sitz baths for 10-15 minutes
- Change position regularly; avoid prolonged sitting
- Ask your doctor about zinc oxide creams
- Use paracetamol for pain; avoid ibuprofen

Good News: Most hemorrhoids improve after delivery.

### Heartburn and GERD

Burning in the chest or throat is common, often increasing in the third trimester as the growing baby pushes the stomach upward.

#### Prevention and Relief:

- Elevate the head of your bed with a wedge pillow
- Wait 2-3 hours after eating before lying



### Essential Daily Habits

- Diet: High-fiber foods daily + 5-6 small meals
- Hydration: 8-10 glasses (water, buttermilk, coconut water, soups)
- Movement: 30 minutes daily (walking, prenatal yoga, swimming)
- Stress: Regular sleep, deep breathing, meditation, calming music

down

- Eat 5-6 smaller, more frequent meals instead of large ones
- Avoid foods that trigger reflux: spicy or oily dishes, coffee, chocolate, and mint
- Sleep on your left side and wear non-restrictive clothing

Medications: Lifestyle measures come first. If symptoms persist, doctors may recommend calcium-based antacids, H2 blockers like famotidine (ranitidine has been withdrawn due to safety concerns), or PPIs when needed. Consult your doctor before taking any medication.

### Important Safety Warning

Never start or stop any medication or supplement (including herbal remedies) without your doctor's approval. Seek urgent care for severe pain, persistent vomiting, blood in stool, high fever, or sudden symptom worsening.

While digestive issues during pregnancy are common and uncomfortable, most can be managed effectively with dietary changes, lifestyle modifications, and timely medical advice. These problems typically resolve after delivery. Always maintain open communication with your healthcare provider—they are your best partner in navigating these changes.



"This pill will fix your gut!" "Boost immunity instantly!" These ads are everywhere. But do probiotics really work? Can your kitchen provide what expensive supplements promise? Here's the evidence-based truth.

## Two Terms to Understand

**Probiotics** = The Soldiers. Living good bacteria in yogurt, buttermilk, fermented foods. They populate your gut and fight bad bacteria.

**Prebiotics** = Their Food. Fiber in bananas, onions, garlic. Your body can't digest them, but good bacteria thrive on them.

## Which Problems Do They Actually Solve?

Billions of bacteria live in your gut—both good and bad. When balanced, they aid digestion and boost immunity. Different strains target different issues:

**Antibiotic-Related Diarrhea:** Antibiotics are like a forest fire—they kill the infection but also wipe out good gut bacteria, causing diarrhea in up to 30% of users. Probiotics cut this risk by 50% or more. Start eating yogurt when taking

**Dr. S. Srivatsan Gurumurthy**  
MS, DNB  
GEM Hospital, Coimbatore



antibiotics and continue for 2 weeks after finishing. Pro tip: If using supplements, space them 2 hours from antibiotics so the antibiotic doesn't kill the probiotic.

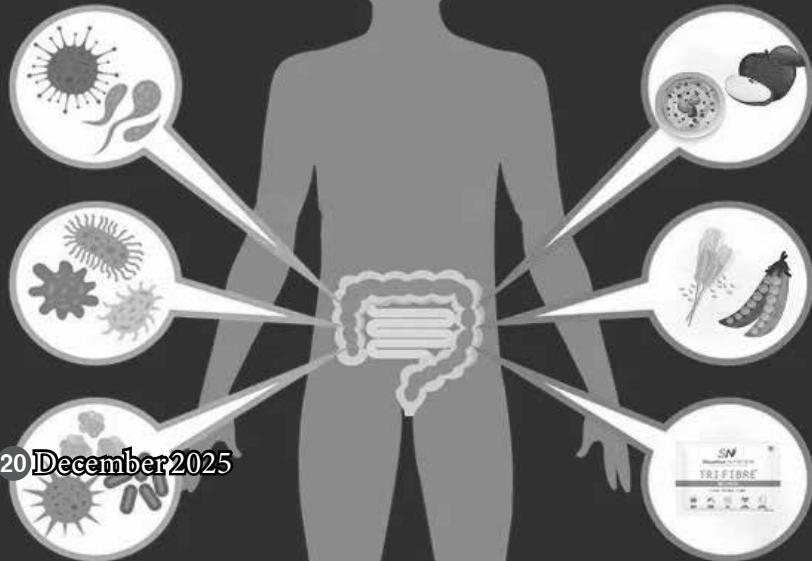
**Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS):** For those suffering from bloating, abdominal pain, and irregular bowel movements, specific probiotic strains have been shown to reduce symptoms. Not all strains work for everyone—your doctor can help match the right type to your specific symptoms.

**Children's Diarrhea:** Studies show probiotics can help children recover from infectious diarrhea about one day faster. They're safe and effective alongside rehydration therapy.

## The Natural Way: Food Over Pills

Food beats supplements every time. It's affordable, provides complete nutrition, and tastes better. Here are your kitchen superfoods:

# Probiotics & Prebiotics



## Probiotic Power Foods

- Yogurt & Buttermilk: The gold standard. One cup daily is excellent for gut health.
- Fermented Rice Water (Kanji): A traditional powerhouse rich in good bacteria.
- Fermented Idli/Dosa Batter: Good bacteria develop during fermentation.

Important Note: While cooking idli/dosa reduces live bacteria counts, the fermentation process makes them incredibly easy to digest and gut-friendly. Pairing them with fresh onion chutney makes them a powerhouse meal.

## Prebiotic Powerhouses:

- Bananas: An easy daily snack packed with fiber.
- Onions & Garlic: Add generously to your cooking.
- Whole Grains: Oats, ragi (finger millet), corn for breakfast.
- Legumes: Lentils, dates, and beans help good bacteria flourish.

Perfect Synbiotic Combos: Yogurt + sliced banana | Idli + onion chutney. These pair probiotics and prebiotics together for maximum benefit!

## When Are Supplements Needed?

Most healthy people don't need expensive daily supplements. However, they can be useful in specific situations:

- During and after antibiotic courses to replenish gut bacteria
- For chronic digestive issues like IBS (with doctor-prescribed specific strains)
- If you're lactose intolerant or cannot consume dairy products
- During certain medical conditions under professional supervision

Important Reality Check: Probiotics don't colonize your gut permanently. They stay temporarily and provide benefits while present. This means you need to take them for at least 4-8

## Your Action Plan

**Daily:** 1 cup yogurt/buttermilk + banana/onion/garlic

**Weekly:** Idli/dosa 3-4 times, oats/ragi for breakfast

**For problems:** Consult your doctor. Supplements need 4-8 weeks. Be patient - gut health is a marathon, not a sprint.



weeks to see results, and benefits fade without ongoing intake. Be patient - gut health is a marathon, not a sprint.

## Busting the Myths

The Myth	The Truth
'Cures all stomach issues'	FALSE. Specific strains for specific problems. No cure-all.
'Instant weight loss'	FALSE. Weak evidence. Diet and exercise are key.
'One dose forever'	FALSE. Temporary effect. Need regular consumption.

You don't need a 'magic pill.' Build gut health with traditional foods - yogurt, buttermilk, idli, dosa - combined with fiber-rich meals, exercise, and sleep. Supplements help specific conditions when prescribed. Skip the hype. Focus on real, sustainable habits that support your gut naturally! ●



## Can You Live Without a Gallbladder?

Your gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ tucked under your liver that stores bile—a fluid helping you digest fats. While helpful, it can sometimes cause more trouble than it's worth. Gallstones affect millions worldwide, making gallbladder removal one of the most common surgeries globally. The big question: Can you live normally without it? (Spoiler: Yes, absolutely!)

### Why Do Stones Form?

When bile contains too much cholesterol or bilirubin, it hardens into stones. They range from sand-grain size to golf balls. About 70-80% are cholesterol-based.

The '4 Fs' Risk Factors: Female, Forty, Fertile (pregnancy/multiple births), Fat (obesity). Women aged 40+ have 2-3 times higher risk than men. Rapid weight loss, diabetes, high-fat diets, and family history also increase risk.

### The 'Silent' Stones vs. The 'Attack'

Surprising fact: 80% of people with gallstones have no symptoms—these 'silent stones' often need no treatment. However, when a stone blocks a bile duct, a gallbladder attack occurs.

**The Pain:** Sudden, intense upper right abdominal pain, often radiating to the shoulder or between shoulder blades. Typically triggered after fatty meals. Accompanied by nausea, vomiting, bloating.

**Risk:** Among symptomatic patients, 1-4% yearly develop complications like cholecystitis or pancreatitis. Don't ignore recurring pain.

### Why Surgery is the Gold Standard

'Can't medication dissolve them?' Medications work only on small cholesterol stones, take 6-24 months, and stones recur in 50% after stopping. Surgery is faster, safer, and permanent.

## Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy: Modern Keyhole Surgery

Since the 1990s, minimally invasive keyhole surgery has become standard. Surgeons make 3-4 tiny cuts (0.5-1cm) to insert a camera and instruments.

### The Benefits

- Minimal scarring and significantly less pain
- Same-day or next-day discharge in most cases
- Return to normal activities in 7-14 days
- 60-90 minute procedure under general anesthesia
- Complication rate under 1%

Note: 5-7% of cases require open surgery (larger incision) for severe inflammation or complications-recovery takes 4-6 weeks.

### Life After Removal: You'll Thrive!

Your liver is the real hero-it produces bile; the gallbladder just stored it. After removal, bile flows continuously from liver to intestine. Think of it this way: before, you had a 'storage tank' releasing a gush of bile. Now, it's a steady 'drip' that works perfectly fine.

Over 90% of people adapt fully within 1-3 months. Digestion continues normally, and many feel better without chronic inflammation.

### Post-Surgery Action Plan Diet (First 4-6 Weeks)

- Low-fat: Steam or grill instead of frying; choose lean meats, fish, and skim dairy
- Small, frequent meals with fiber-rich foods (oats, vegetables, fruits)
- Avoid heavy cream, fried foods, spicy curries initially

Hydrate: 8-10 glasses water; add buttermilk or lemon water



**Dr. Pradeep Joshua**

MD, MS

GEM Hospital, Coimbatore



### Seek Emergency Care Immediately If:

- Fever above 101°F with chills
- Jaundice (yellowing skin/eyes), dark urine, pale stools
- Severe abdominal pain lasting over 30 minutes
- Persistent vomiting or rigid abdomen

### Lifestyle

- Walk daily from day one; build to 30 minutes moderate exercise
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Maintain steady, healthy weight

Good News: Most people return to their regular diet within a month and feel significantly better!

Gallstones don't vanish on their own. If you have symptoms, see your doctor for an ultrasound. Laparoscopic removal is routine, safe (99% success rate), and allows you to return to normal eating soon. With proper post-op care-fiber, movement, healthy fats-you'll feel great. For those suffering from attacks, surgery is often the first step back to feeling like yourself again!



# GEM Hospital Launches Dedicated Endometriosis Center

GEM Hospital in Coimbatore has taken a significant step in women's reproductive health by launching a dedicated Endometriosis Center—the first of its kind in the city. This specialized facility addresses a condition that affects approximately 10% of women globally, yet often remains misdiagnosed for years.

## Understanding Endometriosis

Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to the uterine lining grows outside the uterus—on ovaries, fallopian tubes, and other pelvic organs. This misplaced tissue bleeds during menstruation but cannot exit the body, causing inflammation, scarring, and adhesions that bind organs together.

## Common Symptoms

- Severe pelvic and lower abdominal pain during menstruation
- Pain during intercourse
- Chronic pelvic pain between periods
- Painful bowel movements during menstruation
- Difficulty conceiving or infertility

## The Silent Epidemic

The numbers reveal a concerning reality: Globally, 6-10% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) live with endometriosis—that's approximately 190 million women worldwide. Among women experiencing infertility, the prevalence jumps dramatically to 30-50%.

Studies show women with endometriosis have 2-4 times higher risk of infertility compared to the general population. Research also reveals that 44% of women with unexplained infertility actually have endometriosis when properly diagnosed.

The diagnostic delay remains alarming: many women suffer for 7-10 years before receiving an accurate diagnosis, with their pain often dismissed as 'normal period discomfort.' This delay not only prolongs suffering but can worsen disease progression and impact fertility outcomes.

## A Comprehensive Approach

The new Endometriosis Center at GEM Hospital was inaugurated by distinguished guests including V. Bharathi Harishankar, Vice-Chancellor of Avinashilingam University,



and Shweta Suman, Additional District Collector (Development) of Coimbatore, in the presence of Dr. C. Palanivelu (Chairman, GEM Hospital), Dr. P. Praveen Raj (CEO), and Dr. Kavitha Yogini (Head of Endogynecology).

'Our goal is to create a supportive environment where patients receive comprehensive treatment tailored to their individual needs,' said Dr. C. Palanivelu. 'Endometriosis is often misunderstood and misdiagnosed, leading to years of unnecessary suffering.'

### Multidisciplinary Excellence

The center integrates expertise from multiple specialties:

- Gynecological surgeons specializing in advanced laparoscopy
- Gastroenterologists for bowel-related endometriosis
- Urologists for urinary tract involvement
- Anesthesiologists and pain management specialists
- Nutritionists for holistic care
- Psychological support teams

Dr. Kavitha Yogini emphasized that this multidisciplinary approach ensures accurate diagnosis and personalized treatment plans for each patient.

### State-of-the-Art Treatment

The center combines cutting-edge diagnostic capabilities with advanced treatment modalities. Patients benefit from:

- Advanced imaging and diagnostic tools for accurate disease mapping
- Minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery with faster recovery
- Robotic-assisted procedures for complex cases
- Personalized treatment plans addressing both pain and fertility concerns
- Psychological counseling to address the emotional impact
- Nutritional guidance to support overall wellness

'Each patient's journey is unique,' Dr. Praveen Raj explained. 'Our integrated approach ensures comprehensive care—from diagnosis through treatment and long-term management—all under one roof.'

To mark the launch, GEM Hospital released a comprehensive guidebook titled 'Everything About Endometriosis,' providing patients and families with essential information about the condition, treatment options, and lifestyle management.

### For More Information

GEM Hospital Endometriosis Center, Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore. Phone: 90039 12121 | [www.gemhospitals.com](http://www.gemhospitals.com)



# THE POWER OF HOPE

Cancer detection is one of the most feared and misunderstood experiences in modern medicine. To clear up these misconceptions, we spoke with Dr. P. Senthilnathan, Director of GEM Hospitals and a renowned colorectal cancer surgeon. He shared some astonishing truths about cancer treatment.

## 1. A Healthy Lifestyle Helps, But It's Not a Guarantee!

One of the first questions cancer patients often ask is, 'Why did this happen to me? I've done everything right...' While factors like poor diet, lack of exercise, obesity, smoking, and alcohol consumption increase the risk of cancer, their absence does not guarantee immunity from it, explains Dr. Senthilnathan.

To clarify this, he uses a simple analogy: Millions of cells divide in our body every day. Just as a well-maintained car might unexpectedly break down, a cell division can go wrong and turn into cancer. This is why even healthy individuals should never ignore warning signs. Early detection is crucial, and symptoms should always be evaluated by a doctor, regardless of one's lifestyle.

## 2. A Patient's Belief is as Powerful as Medicine!

The shock of a cancer diagnosis can lead to a sense of hopelessness for both patients and their families. However, Dr. Senthilnathan emphasizes that a positive and determined mindset is critical for successful treatment outcomes.

'As doctors, we may believe in the treatment, but patients must believe that they can win this fight,' he says. Cancer treatment is not a one-time event; it's a long journey where doctors and patients walk together. Since treatment often spans months, including surgery followed by chemotherapy or radiation, continued cooperation and the belief in healing are key drivers of successful outcomes.

## 3. Technology Is Making Major Surgery Less Invasive!

The pace of technological advancements in cancer treatment provides surgeons with more powerful tools than ever before. Dr. Senthilnathan

**Dr. P. Senthilnathan**

MS, DNB, MRCS  
GEM Hospital, Chennai



refers to these developments as 'great gifts' and 'powerful weapons' in the fight against cancer. For example, for colorectal cancer, surgery no longer involves the large open procedures that were common 30 years ago.

### **Key technological advancements include:**

- 3D and 4K Laparoscopy: This provides surgeons with incredibly clear, high-resolution, three-dimensional images, allowing for greater precision.
- Robotic Surgery: Robotic arms, controlled by the surgeon, allow for highly precise movements without the natural tremors of the human hand.
- ICG Camera Systems: This technology uses fluorescence imaging to detect blood flow and identify cancerous tissues that are otherwise invisible to the naked eye.

These technologies offer patients quicker recovery times and minimal scarring, transforming the surgery experience. Post-operative healing is faster, and the procedure itself disrupts their life much less.

### **4. The Fight Against Cancer Happens Beyond the Hospital Walls**

Dr. Senthilnathan believes that his duty as an oncologist extends beyond providing treatment to his patients. He feels a profound responsibility to raise public awareness to prevent delayed diagnoses.

'Not understanding the symptoms and delaying treatment breaks my heart. If patients had come two or three months earlier, we could have saved them from the advanced stages,' he shares.

To address this, GEM Hospitals has initiated the GEM Onco Shield, a three-pronged community outreach program. This initiative focuses on early cancer detection, making sure that individuals in

## **GEM Onco Shield - A Social Approach to Cancer Prevention**

- **Comprehensive Screening Plans:** The 'GEM Onco Shield' program offers extensive screening for early-stage cancer detection.
- **Free Second Opinions:** Special advisory services for patients in remote areas.
- **Family Member Screening:** Special tests for the family members of cancer patients, considering genetic risks.



remote areas can receive proper consultation, screening, and genetic testing to catch cancer early.

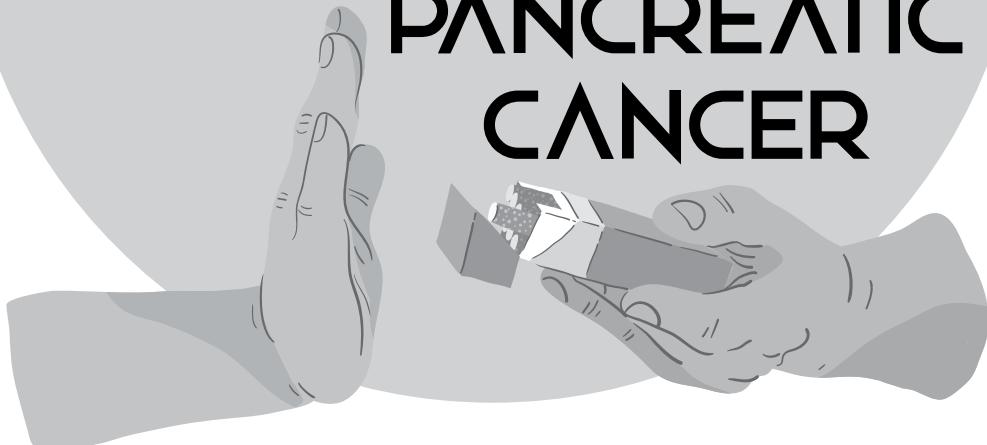
### **The Powerful Combination of Technology, Belief, and Awareness**

The battle against cancer is a multifaceted effort, relying on a combination of advanced technology, a positive mindset, preventive measures, and widespread public awareness. While medical advancements provide the tools to fight cancer, a hopeful mindset, awareness, and encouragement form the foundation for success.

As Dr. Senthilnathan's insights remind us, turning the conversation about cancer from fear to hope can be a powerful step towards breaking the stigma and embracing the potential for recovery. The next time we talk about cancer, can we shift our dialogue from fear to hope? Let's work together, combining all these powerful forces in the fight against this disease. ●



# How Cigarette Smoking Fuels **PANCREATIC CANCER**



When people think of smoking's deadly consequences, lung cancer is usually the first to come to mind. However, pancreatic cancer—among the leading causes of cancer deaths in the United States—claims over 50,000 lives annually and is significantly fueled by cigarette smoking.

## The Devastating Numbers

Smokers face twice the risk of developing pancreatic cancer compared to never-smokers, with approximately 25% of cases directly linked to cigarette smoking. Heavy smokers—those consuming a pack daily—face up to five times higher risk. The danger extends beyond cigarettes: cigars, smokeless tobacco, and secondhand smoke exposure all elevate risk. Unfiltered cigarettes, deep inhalation, and high-tar products are most dangerous, as carcinogens travel through the bloodstream to attack the pancreas.

## How Smoking Destroys the Pancreas

Your pancreas produces digestive enzymes and hormones like insulin that regulate blood sugar. Cigarette carcinogens trigger inflammation, disrupt normal cell growth, and

create tissue scarring—damage that transforms into cancer. Approximately 90% of pancreatic cancers are ductal adenocarcinomas (the most common type of pancreatic cancer), originating precisely where smoking-induced damage concentrates.

Tobacco smoke contains over 7,000 chemicals; at least 60 are confirmed carcinogens including arsenic, benzene, and nitrosamines. These compounds alter pancreatic tissue through fibrosis, chronic inflammation, and abnormal cell growth.

Even without cancer, smoking disrupts blood sugar regulation by suppressing insulin and increasing glucagon, contributing to diabetes—especially long-standing or poorly controlled cases. This creates a vicious cycle: diabetes itself increases pancreatic cancer risk. Tissue scarring leads to chronic pancreatitis, causing permanent damage and significantly elevating cancer risk.

**Dr Rajiv Maharaj**  
MS, DNB  
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## Impact on Survival and Recovery

The harm continues even after diagnosis. Current smokers face significantly worse outcomes, with nearly 40% increased risk of death compared to never-smokers. Remarkably, former smokers' outcomes approach those of never-smokers—evidence that quitting matters profoundly, even after diagnosis.

### The Power of Quitting

Risk begins declining immediately upon quitting. A 2018 meta-analysis found pancreatic cancer risk drops rapidly after cessation, with meaningful reduction beginning within months. While returning to never-smoker levels may take up to 20 years, the longer you stay smoke-free, the



closer your risk moves toward that of someone who never smoked. The message is clear: quit as soon as possible.

While smoking is the most important modifiable risk factor, others you can control include obesity, diabetes, chemical exposure, chronic pancreatitis, and liver cirrhosis. Unmodifiable factors include male gender, age over 45, family history of pancreatic cancer, specific genetic syndromes, and Helicobacter pylori infection.

### The Stark Reality

Pancreatic cancer presents formidable challenges, with five-year survival rates around

## Protect Your Pancreas

Your pancreas produces digestive enzymes and regulates blood sugar through insulin. Protect it:

- ✓ Stop smoking immediately
- ✓ Avoid all forms of tobacco, including cigars and smokeless tobacco
- ✓ Maintain healthy weight
- ✓ Limit alcohol consumption
- ✓ Exercise regularly
- ✓ Manage diabetes effectively
- ✓ See your doctor if you notice persistent upper abdominal pain, unexplained weight loss, or yellowing of the eyes or skin

If you're over 45, have family history of pancreatic cancer, or have diabetes, consult your physician about screening. Talk to your doctor about nicotine replacement, quit-lines, or support groups—using help more than doubles the chance of quitting successfully.

13%. Early detection is rare; symptoms emerge only after progression. Some develop this disease through genetic predisposition, but smokers actively fuel it with every cigarette, doubling their cancer risk.

Quit today—stopping now protects your pancreas and extends your life. If quitting seems overwhelming, seek behavioral and medical support including counseling and medications. Take action now, because once pancreatic cancer strikes, options become limited. ●



As we step into a new year, we often make resolutions about our waistlines or our wallets. But this year, the most critical resolution might be one you haven't considered: your liver.

In India, a silent epidemic is brewing. Recent studies reveal that 38.6% of adults suffer from fatty liver disease. In urban areas, this number spikes to nearly 54%. Perhaps most alarmingly, it is no longer just an adult issue—over 35% of children are now showing signs of liver fat due to rising childhood obesity.

## The Two Faces of Fatty Liver

Fatty liver isn't just about alcohol. It primarily presents in two forms:

1. Alcoholic Liver Disease (ALD): Caused by excessive drinking, where the liver stores fat, leading to inflammation and scarring.
2. Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

(NAFLD/MASLD): This affects people who drink little to no alcohol. In India, it is driven by modern lifestyle factors: high-calorie diets, sedentary habits, and metabolic issues like diabetes.

**The 'Lean' Paradox:** You don't have to be overweight to be at risk. 'Lean NAFLD' is common in India, affecting individuals with a normal BMI who have poor metabolic health (high belly fat or blood sugar).

## The Good News: It is Reversible

Here is the silver lining: The liver is the only organ capable of significant regeneration. In its early stages, fatty liver disease is completely reversible through lifestyle changes.

Global research confirms that losing just 3–5% of your body weight can reduce liver fat. Losing 7–10% can actually reverse liver damage and inflammation.

# Your Liver Needs a New Year's Resolution Too!

## Your 4-Step Liver Detox Plan

### 1. The Plate Makeover

Adopt a modified Mediterranean diet.

- Eat: Whole grains (millets, oats), plenty of vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, and healthy fats like olive oil or mustard oil.
- Avoid: The 'Whites' (white rice, maida/refined flour, sugar), red meat, and fried snacks.
- The Coffee Hack: Surprisingly, drinking black coffee (without sugar) is proven to benefit liver health. Up to three cups a day can help prevent fibrosis.

### 2. Move More

Aim for 150–300 minutes of moderate activity per week. A brisk 30-minute walk, five days a week, works wonders. Strength training is also excellent for improving insulin sensitivity, which directly helps the liver.

### 3. Manage the 'Cousins'

The liver doesn't work in isolation. You must manage related conditions like Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. If these are out of control, your liver suffers.

### 4. Zero Alcohol

If you have been diagnosed with fatty liver, abstinence is the only safe policy. Even small amounts can fuel inflammation in an already compromised liver.

### Diagnosis: Catching the Silent Killer

Fatty liver often has no symptoms until it is advanced. You should get tested if you:



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### Red Flags: When to See a Doctor While often silent, watch for these warning signs:

- Persistent fatigue or weakness.
- Dull pain in the upper right abdomen.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Yellowing of eyes or skin (Jaundice).



- Are overweight (BMI > 25) or have a 'pot belly' (Waist > 90cm for men, > 80cm for women).
- Have diabetes or high cholesterol.
- Are over 40 years old.

### The Toolkit

- LFT (Blood Tests): Checks liver enzyme levels.
- Ultrasound: Visualizes fat buildup.
- Fibroscan: A specialized, painless scan available at centers like Gem Hospital that measures liver 'stiffness' to detect scarring (fibrosis) early.

### Expert Care

Early detection saves lives. Gem Hospital offers specialized care through experienced gastroenterologists and liver transplant specialists, along with free medical camps to help catch this condition before it becomes irreversible.

Make 2026 the year you prioritize the engine of your body. Start today—your liver will thank you! ●





# A Complete Guide to Preventing Hemorrhoids and Fistulas

**I**t is a topic often whispered about behind closed doors, yet the statistics speak loudly: over 50% of people aged 50 and above will experience hemorrhoids at some point in their lives. In India, with changing diets and increasingly sedentary lifestyles, these numbers are rising even among younger adults.

Despite being incredibly common, shame and embarrassment often prevent people from seeking help until the pain becomes unbearable. This delay can turn a simple, manageable issue into a complex surgical problem.

Understanding the mechanics of these conditions is the first step toward comfort. The good news? Most anal health issues can be prevented with simple, everyday habits.

## 1. What Are Hemorrhoids (Piles)?

To understand hemorrhoids, think of the anatomy of your anal canal. Everyone has 'cushions' of tissue filled with blood vessels that help control bowel movements. When these cushions become swollen and inflamed due to pressure, they become hemorrhoids (or piles).



Think of them like varicose veins, but for your bottom.

- **Internal Hemorrhoids:** These lie deep inside the rectum where there are few pain-sensing nerves. You usually won't feel them, but you might see bright red blood in the toilet bowl. If they get large enough, they may prolapse (push out) during a bowel movement.
- **External Hemorrhoids:** These form under the skin around the anus, an area rich in pain nerves. They can be itchy, painful, and feel like hard lumps.

## The Modern Culprits

Why do they happen? It boils down to pressure.

- **Chronic Constipation:** Straining to pass hard stool is the #1 cause.
- **The 'Mobile Phone Trap':** In the smartphone era, people spend far longer on the toilet than necessary. Sitting for prolonged periods acts like a suction cup, drawing blood to the rectal veins and increasing pressure significantly.

## When to See a Doctor

Many people try to treat these issues with over-the-counter creams for months. However, you should see a specialist if:

- You see blood in your stool (never assume it is 'just piles'-it can sometimes indicate polyps or other conditions).
- You feel a persistent lump or swelling.
- You have recurring boils or pus discharge near the anus (a sign of a fistula).<sup>19</sup>
- Pain is interfering with your daily life.



- Pregnancy: The weight of the growing baby presses on the pelvic veins.
- Heavy Lifting: Improper lifting at the gym or work can increase intra-abdominal pressure.

- Does it heal on its own? Rarely. Because the tunnel passes through sphincter muscles, it is difficult for the body to close it naturally without medical intervention.

### 2. What Is an Anal Fistula?

A fistula is more complex and often more troublesome than hemorrhoids. While a hemorrhoid is a swelling, a fistula is an abnormal tunnel.

It typically starts as an infection in an anal gland. This infection creates an abscess (a pus-filled pocket). If the abscess bursts or is drained but doesn't heal properly, a small track remains, connecting the infected gland inside the anus to the skin outside.

- The Cycle of Pain: A fistula often causes a cycle of pain, swelling, and discharge. The opening on the skin might close up, causing pus to build up again (pain), then burst (relief), and repeat.



**Dr. Pinak Das Gupta**

MS,  
GEM Hospital, Chennai

### Your Prevention Toolkit

The best medicine is prevention. By keeping your digestive system running smoothly, you can avoid the strain that causes these issues.

#### 1. The Fiber Factor

Fiber is your best friend. It adds bulk to your stool and absorbs water to soften it, allowing it to pass without strain.

- The Goal: Aim for 25–30 grams of fiber daily.
- Indian Superfoods: Include everyday staples like oats, broken wheat (daliya), spinach (palak), lentils (dal), papaya, and guava.
- Pro Tip: Increase fiber gradually. Adding too much too quickly can cause gas and bloating.

#### 2. Hydration is Key

Fiber works like a sponge—it needs water to plump up. If you eat fiber but don't drink water, the stool becomes hard and dry, actually worsening constipation.



- **The Habit:** Drink 1.5–2 liters (8–10 glasses) of water daily. Keep a bottle at your desk as a visual reminder.

### 3. Master Your Toilet Habits

- **The 3-Minute Rule:** Try to limit your toilet time to 3–5 minutes. Leave your phone outside the bathroom to avoid the temptation to scroll.
- **Listen to the Urge:** When your body signals it's time to go, go immediately. Delaying causes the colon to reabsorb water from the stool, making it harder.
- **Posture Matters:** The modern sitting toilet isn't anatomically ideal. Using a small footstool to elevate your knees (simulating a squat) can straighten the anal canal and make passing stool easier with less straining.

### 4. Hygiene & Comfort

- **Be Gentle:** Aggressive wiping with rough toilet paper can irritate external hemorrhoids. Use water, a health faucet, or moist, fragrance-free wipes.
- **Sitz Bath:** If you feel minor irritation, soaking your bottom in a tub of warm water for 10–15 minutes improves blood flow and relaxes the sphincter muscles.

### Advanced Care: Fear-Free Treatments

The fear of painful surgery keeps many away from the doctor. However, medical technology has revolutionized proctology. Gem Hospital, a leader in

this field, offers minimally invasive solutions that prioritize patient comfort.

#### For Hemorrhoids (Piles)

- **Laser Therapy:** Uses laser energy to shrink the hemorrhoid without cutting. It is virtually painless with no bleeding.
- **Stapler Surgery:** For larger piles, a specialized stapler device removes excess tissue and lifts the hemorrhoid back into place. Recovery is much faster than traditional open surgery.

#### For Fistulas

- **LIFT (Ligation of Intersphincteric Fistula Tract):** A complex but effective technique that cures the fistula without cutting the sphincter muscles, ensuring bowel control is perfectly preserved.
- **VAAFT (Video-Assisted Anal Fistula Treatment):** A tiny camera is used to see inside the fistula tract and treat it from the inside out.

#### The Bottom Line

There is no need to suffer in silence or feel embarrassed. Colorectal specialists deal with these conditions every day. By making small adjustments—drinking that extra glass of water, eating a bowl of oats, and putting the phone away—you can protect yourself from years of discomfort.



**Take charge of your health today.**

Do not ignore the warning signs; early intervention is the key to a pain-free life!



# World-class expertise meets world-class technology to fight against cancer



Dr. DIVYA G

Consultant Pathologist and HoD

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