

# People fear cancer more than other serious illness

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More than a third of people in the UK fear cancer more than other life-threatening conditions – such as Alzheimer's, stroke and heart disease according to a Cancer Research UK survey.

And top of the list of cancers most feared is brain cancer followed by bowel and lung cancers.

Cancer Research UK commissioned a YouGov survey of more than 2000 people to find out the disease or condition feared by most people in the UK.

More than a third (35 per cent) said cancer was the disease they feared most and a quarter (25 per cent) said Alzheimer's.

When asked which cancer they feared most 16 per cent said brain cancer. The main reasons for this were that they believed it was the cancer they were most likely to die from (57 per cent) or that it had the worst symptoms (47 per cent).

For men, bowel cancer is the second most feared (12 per cent) followed by lung (10 per cent) and prostate (10 per cent) cancers.

And just last week Radio Two presenter Chris Evans described his bowel cancer scare and said men were especially prone to fear of cancer.

For women, [breast cancer](#) (13 per cent) is the second most feared

followed by bowel (8 per cent) and lung (7 per cent) cancers.

When asked about survival 21 per cent said they thought breast cancer had the best survival rate and 12 per cent thought testicular cancer had the best chance of survival.

Dr. Lesley Walker, director of cancer information at Cancer Research UK, said: “Cancer is a very emotive subject and it’s understandable why so many people [fear](#) it among other diseases. Yet people should be reassured that we are doing all we can to find new treatments for the disease. Our greatest achievement in brain tumor research has been temozolomide – a drug that Cancer Research UK created in the lab and developed through to the first treatment of patients. It’s now used to treat thousands of people all over the world with high grade glioma – an aggressive type of brain tumor.

“What’s heartening is that overall survival from all cancers has doubled over the last 40 years and this optimistic message is reaching the public who have rightly picked breast and testicular cancer which are both cancers with high survival rates.

“Our latest figures show more than 80 per cent of women now survive their breast cancer for five years or more. And our research – which has helped lead the way in treating bowel, prostate and lung cancer – has been at the heart of that progress. Our scientists helped to show the most effective way to use tamoxifen and paved the way for the development of Herceptin. Our work has also shown how radiotherapy can help prevent breast cancer coming back.

“All our research is directly funded by the generosity of the public. And we need to do all we can to maintain the level of [cancer](#) research in the UK so that we can continue making discoveries like these which have the potential to save thousands of lives every year.”

**More information:** When asked “Which ONE, if any, of the following conditions/ diseases do you MOST fear getting?” – the results were as follows:

All UK Adults 2056 in total

Heart disease 3%

Cancer 35%

Alzheimer’s 25%

Stroke 5%

Motor Neurone Disease 7%

Multiple Sclerosis 2%

Diabetes 1%

HIV 2%

Malaria 0%

Other 0%

Don’t know/ prefer not to say 8%

Not applicable – I don’t fear getting any condition/ disease 10%

When asked “And which ONE, if any, of the following types of cancer do you MOST fear getting?” – the results were as follows

All UK Adults 2056 in total

Breast 7%

Bowel 10%

Lung 9%

Prostate 5%

Malignant melanoma (skin) 2%

Cervical 2%

Ovarian 3%

Pancreatic 5%

Oesophageal (of the food pipe) 4%

Leukaemia 2%

Brain 16%

Testicular 3%

Other 1%

Don't know/ prefer not to say 22%

Not applicable – I don't fear getting any types of cancer 10%

The other questions asked what were the main reasons you picked the particular cancer you fear the most; and which of the following cancers (same list as above) do you think had the best survival rate.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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