

## Re: Should we remove a left kidney with a tumor if pulmonary lymph nodes are enlarged?

*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.med.diseases.cancer/2004-11/0119.html>

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> *So you're saying there's a definite cutoff point between "recurrence" and*  
> *"second cancer?" Speaking as a patient, now....what difference does it*  
> *make? You had it, now you have it again.*

>

> *Eva*

>

>

There is a massive difference between a recurrence and a new primary cancer.

When a recurrence occurs it is usually a distant metastasis, and as such represents the tip of a very nasty iceberg. The implication is that the original cancer has spread much more widely than had been hoped, that there are cancer cells circulating in your bloodstream, your bone marrow, and settled in various tissues in various points around the body. Over the next few years many of these will develop into tumours, and while it may be possible to treat some of them individually, and to destroy most of the smaller clusters with chemotherapy, the sheer quantity of tumour sites will eventually overwhelm your system one way or another.

On the other hand, if the original tumour was contained and removed, and there was no cancer left, the original tissue which became cancerous once retains the propensity to do it again. For normal cells to become cancerous requires them to get several genetic ducks in a row, and if it has happened in one location, the chances are that there are other locations that already have –some– ducks lined up. So the chances of getting another cancer in that tissue are rather higher than for the population at large. But should it happen, it is clinically basically the same as the original, as long as it left enough time for the body to have recovered from the first round of treatment.

Consequently in the case of breast cancer, getting a second primary is a good indication for bilateral mastectomies, to get rid of all the potentially cancerous tissue for the future.

sci.med.diseases.cancer: Re: Should we remove a left kidney with a tumor if pulmonary lymph nodes are enlarged?

In between the above two there are some local recurrences, where the original tumour had spread beyond the resected volume, but not beyond the original organ, and so the metastatic scenario still does not apply.

Tim Jackson