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## **Stem Cells Can Help Cancer Grow**

*Prostate Cancer Often Survives After Tumor Killed*

Scientists said that they may now know why some forms of cancer, such as prostate cancer, can reappear elsewhere in the body after they were thought to have been eradicated.

Stem cells -- often touted as a potential cure for many diseases -- may be to blame, researchers at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute said.

Doctors there said they may have to change what has been learned in 60 years of fighting prostate tumors.

"The targets have switched. Now the interest has come around to the cell that may be the source of the tumor, which would be the stem cell," said Gary Smith.

Every adult has stem cells in almost every organ, according to a news release from the institute. They're neutral, meaning they don't do anything until the body tells them what to do.

Right now, treatments like chemotherapy will kill cancer cells in the prostate, but cancer stem cells can be the real problem. Scientists believe they may somehow hide during chemo or radiation, then later they morph into actively growing cancer cells and move to other parts of the body.

"If even one stem cell survives, you're going to have an entire tumor reconstituted, and in a more aggressive form," said Dr. James Mohler.

So in addition to killing cancer cells, researchers are also looking at two different ways to try and kill the cancer stem cells. One is to cut off their blood supply, which might keep them from surviving.

The other is to trick them into becoming actively growing prostate cancer cells at the time of treatment so chemotherapy or radiation will kill them just like it does the other cancer cells.