

Stomach cancer is a general term for cancer affecting the stomach. Generally, it refers to cancer that arises from the cells lining the stomach. These cells, like all cancerous cells, exhibit abnormal and rapid growth. Early in the course of the disease there are usually no symptoms (asymptomatic). As the disease progresses, symptoms like indigestion, nausea, vomiting, and feeling full earlier than normal (early satiety) may develop. The cause of stomach cancer is multifactorial, which means that multiple factors that occur together are necessary for the cancer to develop. These factors can include genetic, immunologic, infectious, and environmental factors. Stomach cancer usually develops randomly for unknown reasons (sporadically), and there is usually no family history. There are about 28,000 people diagnosed with stomach cancer in the United States each year. It affects men more often than it does women, and about 75% of people are over the age of 50. Most people are diagnosed between 60-80 years of age. By some estimates, stomach cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide. Stomach cancer can affect people of all races and ethnic groups but occurs with greater frequency in individuals of African or Hispanic heritage and Native Americans. Worldwide, stomach cancer is more common in East Asia, Eastern Europe, and South America.