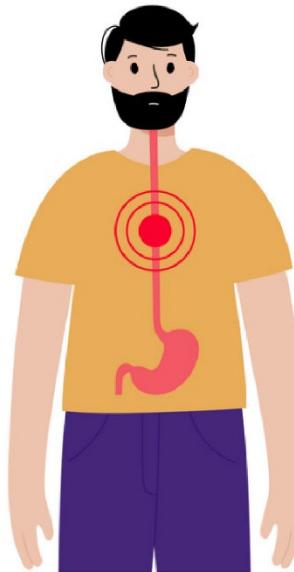


Esophageal cancer



Esophageal cancer is cancer that occurs in the esophagus (a long, hollow tube that runs from the throat to the stomach). The esophagus helps move the food you swallow from the back of your throat to your stomach to be digested.

Esophageal cancer usually begins in the cells that line the inside of the esophagus. Esophageal cancer can occur anywhere along the esophagus. Men are more at risk to get esophageal cancer.

Symptoms:

Early esophageal cancer typically causes no signs or symptoms.

- Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- Weight loss without trying
- Chest pain, pressure or burning



- Worsening indigestion or heartburn
- Coughing or hoarseness

Causes:

It's still unclear what causes esophageal cancer.

Esophageal cancer occurs when cells in the esophagus develop changes (mutations) in their DNA. The changes make cells grow and divide out of control.

Risk factors:

- Having precancerous changes in the cells of the esophagus (Barrett's esophagus)
- Having gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Smoking
- Being obese
- Drinking alcohol
- Having bile reflux
- Having difficulty swallowing because of an esophageal sphincter that won't relax (achalasia)
- Having a steady habit of drinking very hot liquids
- Not eating enough fruits and vegetables
- Undergoing radiation treatment to the chest or upper abdomen



Treatment:

- Surgical removal
- Chemotherapy combined with radiation therapy
- Immunotherapy combined with chemotherapy for advanced cancer
- Relief of symptoms

