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About Esophageal Cancer

Esophageal cancer forms inside the esophagus — a hollow, muscular tube about 10 inches long that carries food and drink from the mouth to the stomach.

Cancer can develop when cells in the lining of the esophagus begin to grow and divide abnormally, forming a tumor. Tumors typically start in the innermost layer of the esophagus. They can eventually metastasize (spread) to the lymph nodes and other organs.

Esophageal cancer is considered rare, compared with cancers of the breast, lung, or prostate. Despite that, the number of people with one of the main

types of esophageal cancer, called adenocarcinoma, has risen dramatically in the past few decades.

The [esophageal cancer experts](#) at Memorial Sloan Kettering use several methods to confirm your [diagnosis](#) and determine the stage of your disease. These include physical examination and imaging tests such as CT scan, PET scan, and endoscopy.

Your treatment will depend on the stage of your cancer. You may have [surgery](#), [chemotherapy](#), [radiation therapy](#), or some combination of these. Endoscopic therapy is also available today for precancerous conditions and very early-stage cancer. Your treatment options will vary based on how localized or advanced your disease is.

For patients who have not developed cancer but have an increased risk for esophageal cancer because of a condition called [Barrett's esophagus](#), we offer a [screening program](#) in which you'll be monitored by our team of experts from different specialties. We may also provide surgery to eliminate [gastroesophageal reflux disease \(GERD\)](#), a risk factor for Barrett's.

You may also be eligible for a [clinical trial](#) exploring a new therapy.

Request an Appointment

Call [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225)
Available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern time)

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