

Exploring stomach cancer concerns

November 10 2022, by Jason Howland



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Stomach cancer, also called gastric cancer, is an abnormal growth of cells that begins in the stomach. It can affect several areas of the stomach, including the main stomach lining or where the esophagus meets the stomach.

November is Stomach Cancer Awareness Month, and experts at Mayo Clinic say there is hope for patients with the disease as treatments continue to improve.

Stomach cancer is relatively rare in the U.S. It's often diagnosed at later stages in the disease, when symptoms like nausea, heartburn and feeling bloated are more pronounced.

"In general, when we talk about [gastric cancer](#), we usually talk about a cancer that's arising from the lining of the stomach," says Dr. Mohamad Sonbol, a Mayo Clinic oncologist.

Early signs of stomach cancer vary, and can include [abdominal pain](#), blood in the stool or just feeling tired.

"If you have a cancer in the stomach, it might ooze blood very slowly, and that can cause anemia, or low hemoglobin, and that can lead to fatigue," says Dr. Sonbol.

If you're a man, you're at higher risk for stomach cancer than a woman. Other risk factors include obesity, smoking and drinking alcohol.

"And then there are other risk factors, such as there are some hereditary syndromes or things that we inherit from our parents that put us at higher risk of developing gastric cancer, [stomach cancer](#)," says Dr. Sonbol.

Treatment options depend on the cancer's location in the stomach, its size and stage, but can include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and immunotherapy.

"I tell patients who have recently been diagnosed with gastric cancer that there is definitely a hope because we've gotten significantly better in the last decade, and more specifically really, in the last year or two, where we have now many more [treatment options](#) than we had before," says Dr. Sonbol.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

Citation: Exploring stomach cancer concerns (2022, November 10) retrieved 4 July 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-11-exploring-stomach-cancer.html>

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