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Stomach Cancer - Overview [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 05/2014

ON THIS PAGE: You will find some basic information about this disease and the parts of the body it may affect. This is the first page of Cancer.Net?s Guide to Stomach Cancer. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen. Think of that menu as a roadmap to this full guide.

About the stomach

The stomach is located in the upper abdomen and plays a central role in digesting food. When food is swallowed, it is pushed down the muscular tube that connects the throat with the stomach called the esophagus and enters the stomach. The muscles in the stomach mix the food and release gastric juices that help break down and digest the food. The food then moves into the small intestine for further digestion.

Types of stomach cancer

Stomach cancer, also called gastric cancer, begins when cells in the stomach become abnormal and grow uncontrollably. A tumor can be cancerous or benign. A cancerous tumor is malignant, meaning it can spread to other parts of the body. A benign tumor means the tumor will not spread. Cancer can begin in any part of the stomach, and it can spread to nearby lymph nodes and other areas of the body, such as the liver, bones, lungs, and a woman?s ovaries.

Most stomach cancers are a type called adenocarcinoma, which means that the cancer started in the glandular tissue that lines the inside of the stomach. Other types of cancerous tumors that form in the stomach include lymphoma [3], gastric sarcoma [4], and carcinoid tumors [5], but these are rare.

Looking for More of an Overview?

If you would like additional introductory information, explore these related items. Please note these links take you to other sections on Cancer.Net:

- *ASCO Answers* Fact Sheet [6]: Read a one-page fact sheet (available as a PDF) that offers an easy-to-print introduction to this type of cancer.
- Cancer.Net En Español [7]: Read about stomach cancer in Spanish. Infórmase sobre cáncer de estómago en español

[7].

To continue reading this guide, use the menu on the side of your screen to select another section.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/stomach-cancer/overview
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/19207
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/19604
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/18645
[6] http://www.cancer.net/sites/cancer.net/files/asco_answers_stomach.pdf
[7] http://www.cancer.net/es/node/18065