



COMMITTED TO YOUR HEALTH AND OUR COMMUNITY

April Yelm Family Medicine Patient Newsletter

April is Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month

The esophagus is a muscular tube connecting the throat to the stomach. **Esophageal cancer** forms in the tissue lining of the esophagus. There are two types of esophageal cancer, squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma.

According to **federal statistics**, an estimated 16,910 people living in the United States were diagnosed with esophageal cancer in 2016 and an estimated 15,690 died of the disease, making it one of the deadliest forms of cancer.

Signs and symptoms of esophageal cancer include

painful or difficult swallowing, weight loss, pain behind the breastbone, hoarseness and cough, and indigestion and heartburn.

Smoking, heavy alcohol consumption and Barrett's esophagus can increase a person's risk of developing esophageal cancer. Other risk factors include older age, being male, and being African-American.

April is Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month.

What Is Esophageal Cancer?

The esophagus is a long, muscular tube that connects the stomach to the throat.

April 16th 2017



There are so many things to do in Thurston County and surrounding areas for April, (including Easter fun) visit the links below to check them out <http://www.visitolympia.com/events>

<http://yelmwa.lionwap.org/>
<http://www.thurstontalk.com/2015/03/19/easter-egg-hunt-olympia-2/>
<http://www.americantowns.com/wa/yelm/events>

Esophageal cancer starts in the inside lining of the esophagus and spreads outward through the other layers as it grows. The two most common forms of esophageal cancer are named for the type of cells that become cancerous:

- **Squamous cell carcinoma:** Cancer that forms in squamous cells, the thin, flat cells lining the esophagus. This cancer is most often found in the upper and middle part of the esophagus, but can occur anywhere along the esophagus. This is also called epidermoid carcinoma.
- **Adenocarcinoma:** Cancer that begins in glandular (secretory) cells. Glandular cells in the lining of the esophagus produce and release fluids such as mucus. Adenocarcinomas usually form in the lower part of the esophagus, near the stomach.

How do you get cancer in your esophagus?

The two main types of esophageal cancer are adenocarcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. Risk factors for both types include age 65 or older, male sex, smoking, excessive alcohol use, a diet poor in fruits and vegetables, obesity, and acid reflux (GERD) with the formation of Barrett's esophagus.

Is cancer of the esophagus curable?

In most cases, esophageal cancer is a treatable disease, but it is rarely curable. **The overall 5-year survival rate in patients amenable to definitive treatment ranges from 5% to 30%.** The occasional patient with very early disease has a better chance of survival.

Is cancer of the esophagus genetic?

Recent studies indicate that esophageal cancer may have genetic (hereditary) risk factors. A number of genes have been identified that may increase the risk for the disease. Additional research is necessary to

determine genetic risk factors for cancer of the esophagus.

How is cancer of the esophagus diagnosed?

This is an important test for diagnosing esophageal cancer. During an upper endoscopy, you are sedated (made sleepy) and then the doctor passes the endoscope down the throat and into the esophagus and stomach. The doctor can use special instruments through the scope to remove (biopsy) samples from any abnormal areas.

How do you treat esophageal cancer?

Surgery is almost always recommended after chemo radiotherapy, unless there are factors that increase the risks from surgery, such as a patient's age or overall health. For advanced esophageal cancer, treatment usually involves chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

