

THE PROACTIVE

Volume 4

Stomach Cancer

April 2018

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Understanding the Stomach

The stomach is a muscular organ, located on the left side of the upper abdomen which receives and digests food that we ingest.

The stomach consists of 5 layers:

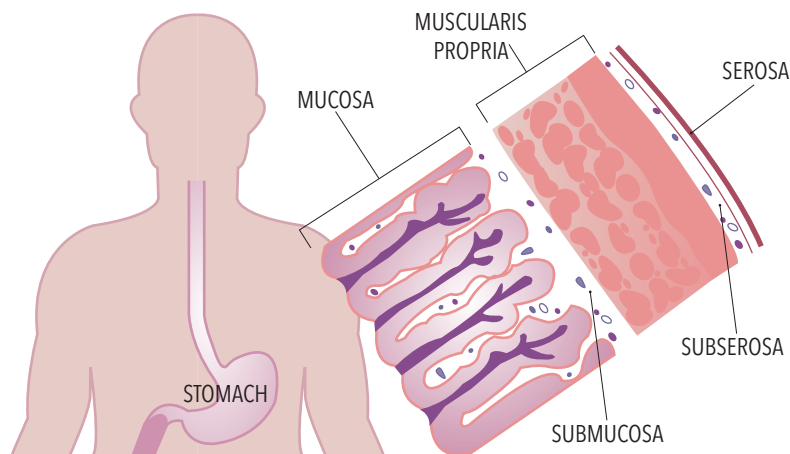
- Mucosa is the innermost layer of the stomach where acid and digestive enzymes are made. Most stomach cancers start here.
- Submucosa is the next supporting layer.
- Outside of the submucosa is the layer called the muscularis propria. This layer is thick muscle that moves and mixes the contents of the stomach.
- Lastly are the 2 outer layers, the subserosa and the serosa, which wrap the stomach.

The layers are vital in determining the stage of the cancer and the patient's prognosis. As cancer grows from the mucosa into the deeper layers, the stage (extent) of the cancer is considered more advanced and will ultimately be harder to treat. Cancers that are found in different sections of the stomach may result in different symptoms.

Symptoms of Stomach Cancer

Often, stomach cancer goes untreated for many years, and is typically not caught until it has spread to another part of the body. It is important to speak with your doctor if you have severe, persistent symptoms affecting your abdominal region. Some signs and symptoms of stomach cancer to be aware of include, but are not limited to:

- Stomach pain
- Feeling bloated after eating
- Fatigue
- Severe, persistent heartburn
- Severe indigestion
- Persistent nausea and/or vomiting
- Unintentional weight loss



The American Cancer Society estimates that there will be 26,240 cases of stomach cancer diagnosed in the United States in 2018. Of those, the ACS estimates approximately 10,800 will lose their battle. *So what exactly is stomach cancer?*

What You Should Know . . .

Stomach cancer, also called gastric cancer, starts in the stomach. The development of stomach cancers are slow paced and extend over a period of time, sometimes over years. Cancerous cells will begin to form within the layers of the stomach.

There are four main types of stomach cancer:

- **Adenocarcinoma:** Adenocarcinoma is the most common type of stomach cancer diagnosed (90-95%). This cancer develops from the cells in the innermost lining of the stomach, the mucosa.
- **Lymphoma:** Lymphoma is cancer of the immune system tissue that is found in the wall of the stomach.
- **Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor:** GISTs can be found anywhere in the digestive tract, but are mostly found in cells of the stomach wall called interstitial cells of Cajal. Some GISTs found are benign.
- **Carcinoid Tumor:** These tumors start in the hormone-making cells of the stomach.

• Other:

There are a few other types of cancers that can be found in the stomach, but are very rare; squamous cell carcinoma, small cell carcinoma and leiomyosarcoma.

Statistically, stomach cancer affects the population of those in their late 60's; average age being 68. The risk that a man will develop stomach cancer is more likely than a woman; 1 in 95 are diagnosed versus 1 in 154 respectively. New cases of stomach cancers have decreased by 1.5% over the last 10 years.

Treatment

Treatment will depend on the type and location of the cancer, as well as the recommendations of your physician. The most common forms of treatment include:

- Chemotherapy
- Radiation Therapy
- Surgery
- Targeted Therapies

If you have been diagnosed with stomach cancer, be sure to review all treatment options with your physician.

Source: American Cancer Society