

Gastrointestinal Cancers

Gastro-Intestinal (GI) cancer is a term for the group of cancers that affect the digestive system. This includes cancers of the oesophagus, gallbladder, liver, pancreas, stomach, small intestine, bowel (large intestine or colon and rectum), and anus. These organs perform unique roles from digesting food and absorbing nutrients (vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and water) to passing waste material out of the body.

Overall, the GI tract and the accessory organs of digestion (pancreas, liver, gall bladder) are responsible for more cancers and more deaths from cancer than any other system in the body. There is significant geographic variation in the rates of different gastrointestinal cancers. These cancers do not discriminate and affect both men and women.

Risk factors are variable for the different organs. Some of them are:

Oesophagus - smoking, alcohol, Barrets Oesophagus, environmental factors

Stomach - h. pylori infections, chronic gastritis, obesity, genetics, diet, age

Liver - chronic hepatitis, alcohol, genetics, chirosis, obesity, type 2 diabetes, aflatoxins

Pancreas- increasing age, obesity, diet, family history, smoking, diabetes

Colon- genetics, diet, obesity, smoking, low finer high fat diet, inflammatory bowel disease

We specialize in all facets of gastrointestinal cancer care from diagnosis to treatment and recovery. Compassion and mutual respect are essential for success in meeting all the dimensions of GI tract cancer care and we partner with patients throughout treatment encouraging them to participate in their own medical care and make informed decisions on gastrointestinal cancer.

GIT Tumor Symptoms

Symptoms of GI tumors vary depending on where a tumor is located in the GI tract; however, symptoms are not noticeable in the early stages, but occasionally, tumors are found at the time of a medical exam or screening for another condition.

When symptoms manifest, they can include the following:

- Nausea
- Diarrhea

- Constipation
- Change in stool color
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes)
- Heartburn

Treatment for GI Tumors

The main types of treatment for GIT tumors are:

- Chemotherapy
- Radiation
- Surgery

In some cases when recommended, these treatments can be combined.

Treatment options are influenced by:

- Patient's age and symptoms
- Patient's medical history/conditions
- Tumor growth rate (spread to lymph nodes, liver, bones, or other organs)
- Tumor size

Type of cells that make up the cancer(histology)

Treatment options should always be discussed with the doctor including a conversation about treatment goals and possible side effects. We collaborate with pathologists, surgeons, radiologists, to develop and implement the most effective multi-modal treatment plan for each case. We develop a gastrointestinal treatment plan that considers the stage and grade of a tumor, previous treatments (if any), extent of the cancer, biopsy analysis and other unique factors. We partner with our patients to achieve the best solution for their cancer care.