Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma (ESCC)

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What Is Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma (ESCC)?

- ESCC is the most common type of esophageal cancer worldwide, accounting for nearly 90% of the 604,100 cases of esophageal cancer each year.iii,iv
- More than 21,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with esophageal cancer annually, with more than 16,000 deaths from the disease.v

Prevalence & Incidence

- One of the two main types of esophageal cancer, ESCC, is a type of cancer that forms in the flat, thin squamous cells that line the inner layer of the esophagus.iii
- The cancer is mostly found in the upper two-thirds of the chest cavity (upper and middle thoracic esophagus) and the neck region (cervical esophagus).ii

Risk Factors

Known risk factors include, but are not limited to:vi,vii

Age

The likelihood of getting ESCC increases with age, with fewer than 15% of cases occurring in people under 55.

Lifestyle Factors

- Tobacco use
- Alcohol use
  *The combination of tobacco and alcohol further increases risk.*

Other Medical Conditions

- Achalasia (a rare swallowing disorder)
- Tylosis (focal thickening of the skin of the hands and feet)
- Plummer-Vinson syndrome (dysphagia, iron-deficiency anemia and esophageal webs)
- Esophageal strictures
- Human papillomavirus infection

Other Cancers

A history of other cancers, including lung, mouth and throat cancer, increases the risk of ESCC.
• Often, symptoms will not appear until the tumor is already in the advanced stage.\textsuperscript{viii}
• Common signs or symptoms may include: \textsuperscript{ix,viii}
  - Trouble swallowing
  - Chest pain
  - Weight loss
  - Indigestion and heartburn
  - Hoarseness
  - Chronic cough
  - Vomiting
  - A lump under the skin
  - Bone pain (occurs if cancer has spread to the bone)
  - Bleeding into the esophagus

ESCC has a five-year survival rate of 20%–30%, due to a lack of available, effective treatment options and difficulty with early detection.\textsuperscript{ix,x}
Certain factors, including the stage of the cancer and the patient’s overall health, can affect the chance of recovery from ESCC.\textsuperscript{i}

Esophageal cancers are usually found after a person experiences signs or symptoms. If medical history and an exam suggest that a person may have cancer, tests may be done to make a diagnosis and assess if the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Diagnostic tests may include:\textsuperscript{xii}

**Imaging tests**
- Barium swallow test
- Computed tomography (CT) scan
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan
- Positron emission tomography (PET) scan

**Lab tests of biopsy samples, which can help identify genetic markers to inform treatment decisions**
- Human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2)
- Programmed death-ligand 1 (PD-L1)
- DNA mismatch repair (MMR) and microsatellite instability (MSI) testing

**Endoscopy**
- Upper endoscopy
- Endoscopic ultrasound
- Bronchoscopy
- Thoracoscopy and laparoscopy

**Blood tests**
- Complete blood count (CBC)
- Liver enzymes
Treatment options and recommendations for esophageal cancer may vary based on the type and stage of the cancer, possible side effects and other conditions. ESCC may be treated with:

- **Goals of Therapy**
  - Alleviating symptoms
  - Prolonging survival

- **Treatment**
  - **Esophagectomy**
  - **Chemotherapy**
  - **Immunotherapy**
  - **Radiation therapy**
  - **Targeted drug therapy**
  - **Endoscopic Treatments**
  - **Chemo-radiotherapy**

### References:


