



STOMACH CANCER PREVENTION AND SCREENING

Cancer Prevention Series 12

Stomach is a sac-like organ in the abdomen. It digests food by secreting gastric juice.

Stomach cancer is a malignant tumour originated in the stomach. The most common type is adenocarcinoma, one that starts from the stomach's inner lining. Other types originating elsewhere of the stomach are relatively rare.

Am I at risk of stomach cancer?

Risk factors of stomach cancer include:

- Helicobacter pylori (*H. pylori*) infection
- Precancerous lesion of stomach cancer (e.g. atrophic gastritis and intestinal metaplasia)
- High intake of salt-preserved food and salty food
- Smoking
- Heavy alcohol consumption
- Overweight or obesity
- Other medical conditions (e.g. pernicious anemia)
- Family history of stomach cancer and certain hereditary syndromes

What are the common symptoms of stomach cancer?

Early stage of stomach cancer usually has no symptoms and may not be easily noticed.

Common symptoms include:

- Indigestion
- Early satiety
- Abdominal pain or discomfort
- Nausea and vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue

You should consult a doctor as soon as possible if you develop any of the above symptoms.

How to reduce the chance of getting stomach cancer?

- Do not smoke, current smokers should quit smoking
- Avoid alcohol consumption
- Avoid salt-preserved foods and have a healthy and balanced diet with adequate consumption of fruit and vegetable
- Being physically active and maintain a healthy body weight



Department of Health

Should I get screened for stomach cancer?

Based on the available international and local scientific evidence, the Government's Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening has made the following recommendations on stomach cancer screening for the local population:

Primary prevention remains an important strategy for reducing the risk of stomach cancer. All individuals should adopt a **healthy lifestyle** which includes **no smoking, avoiding alcohol consumption, healthy eating** (with adequate intake of fruits and vegetables and avoidance of high-salt and salt-preserved foods) and **maintaining healthy body weight**.

For asymptomatic population at average risk

Screening for stomach cancer is **not recommended** in asymptomatic persons at average risk.

Screening for *H. pylori* infection among asymptomatic persons in the general population is also **not recommended**.

For asymptomatic persons at increased risk

Persons at increased risk, e.g. with precancerous lesion of stomach cancer or family history of stomach cancer, may consider **seeking advice from doctors** regarding the need for and approach of screening.