



This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete **NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Esophageal Cancer**. These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit [NCCN.org/patients](http://NCCN.org/patients) or, to order printed copies, visit [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

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for Patients®  
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## What is esophageal cancer?

- Esophageal cancer is a disease of the cells that line the wall of the esophagus.
- The two most common types are called squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma.
- Squamous cell carcinoma is usually found in the middle or top part of the esophagus.
- Adenocarcinoma is usually found at the bottom of the esophagus, near the stomach.

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## How do doctors give esophageal cancer a stage?

**They combine these key pieces of information about your cancer:**

- The size of the tumor (how far it has grown through the esophagus wall)
- Whether there is cancer in any lymph nodes close to the esophagus
- Whether the cancer has spread to distant parts of your body
- How fast the cancer is expected to grow

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## What tests should I expect before treatment?

<b>Upper endoscopy &amp; biopsy</b>	This test allows your doctor to see inside your esophagus using a long tube with a light and a video camera at one end. Using a tool attached to the endoscope, small samples of the tumor are removed for testing.	<b>26</b>
<b>Endoscopic ultrasound</b>	This test uses an ultrasound device and an endoscope to see how deeply the tumor has grown into the esophagus wall. Signs of cancer in lymph nodes and other nearby organs can also be seen.	<b>28</b>
<b>CT scan</b>	This imaging test takes images of the inside of your body from different angles, which are then combined to make 3-D pictures. CT is often combined with another test called PET (positron emission tomography).	<b>26</b>
<b>Biomarker testing</b>	Patients whose cancer has spread (metastasized) may be offered testing for specific biomarkers. If your tumor tests positive for the markers and you meet other criteria, treatment with targeted therapy or immunotherapy may be an option for you.	<b>29</b>



## What are the main types of treatment for esophageal cancer?

<b>Endoscopic therapies</b>	Endoscopic therapies are used for treating very early esophageal cancers. An endoscope and one or more tools are used to remove or kill the cancer cells.	<a href="#">34</a>
<b>Surgery</b>	Esophagectomy is surgery to remove some (or all) of the esophagus and nearby lymph nodes. If cancer has entered your stomach, the top part of your stomach is also removed.	<a href="#">34</a>
<b>Radiation therapy</b>	Radiation therapy uses high-energy waves (similar to x-rays) pointed at the tumor to kill cancer cells. It is often used in combination with chemotherapy.	<a href="#">37</a>
<b>Chemotherapy</b>	Chemotherapy uses drugs injected into your bloodstream to kill cancer cells throughout your body. It is often used in combination with radiation therapy.	<a href="#">38</a>
<b>Targeted therapy and immunotherapy</b>	Targeted therapy and immunotherapy are options for treating <u>some</u> advanced esophageal cancers. Targeted therapy drugs include ramucirumab (Cyramza®) and trastuzumab (Herceptin®). Pembrolizumab (Keytruda®) is an immunotherapy drug used for esophageal cancer.	<a href="#">40</a>

## How is advanced esophageal cancer managed?

<p>Cancer that that can't be cured with treatment, or that has spread to other areas of your body, is called advanced cancer. Management options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If you can do most activities, <b>chemotherapy</b> is an option to slow down cancer growth.</li> <li>■ <b>Supportive care</b> is an option for all advanced cancers.</li> <li>■ Participation in <b>clinical trials</b> is especially encouraged by NCCN.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">53</a>
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## How do I decide between treatment options?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Don't be shy about asking your doctors questions. They are there to help.</li> <li>■ Getting a second opinion is encouraged. Even doctors get second opinions!</li> <li>■ Support groups can be helpful. You can learn a lot from others with esophageal cancer.</li> <li>■ Take the time to compare the pros and cons of treatment options.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">74</a>
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