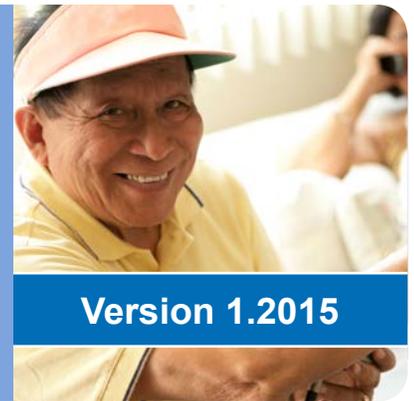


# Esophageal Cancer



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).

NCCN Guidelines  
for Patients®  
Page Number

## What is esophageal cancer?



The esophagus is a tube-shaped organ between the throat and stomach. Esophageal cancer causes tumors to grow in the inner walls of the esophagus. The most common types are squamous cell carcinomas and adenocarcinomas.

[6](#)

## How do doctors rate cancer growth for staging?

<b>T scores</b>	■ Tumors rated Tis or T1 haven't grown beyond the 2 <sup>nd</sup> layer of the esophageal wall while T2, T3, and T4 tumors have.	<a href="#">11</a>
<b>N scores</b>	■ Nearby lymph nodes rated N0 are cancer-free. N1, N2, and N3 scores mean the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes.	
<b>M scores</b>	■ No cancer in distant sites is rated M0. An M1 score means the cancer has spread to one or more distant sites.	

## What tests do I need before treatment?

■ Medical history and physical exam	<a href="#">16</a>
■ Upper GI endoscopy and biopsy	<a href="#">17</a>
■ CT scans	<a href="#">18</a>
■ PET/CT scan if no M1 disease	<a href="#">19</a>
■ CBC (complete blood count) and blood chemistry test	<a href="#">19</a>
■ EUS (endoscopic ultrasound) and bronchoscopy if no M1 disease	<a href="#">19</a>
■ ER (endoscopic resection) of small (Tis or T1) tumors	<a href="#">20</a>
■ Biopsy of M1 site (if needed)	<a href="#">20</a>
■ HER2 testing if M1 adenocarcinoma	<a href="#">20</a>



## What are the options for squamous cell carcinoma?

<b>Early cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endoscopic treatments are preferred for tumors confined to the first layer of the esophageal wall. When in the second layer, surgery to remove at least part of your esophagus is an option.</li> </ul>	<b>36</b>
<b>Invasive cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cancer has grown beyond the esophagus' second layer, spread to lymph nodes, or both. Chemoradiation is often used. Surgery to remove the cancer can be done in some cases.</li> </ul>	<b>40</b>
<b>Recurrent cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cancer has re-appeared on tests. For cancer near to where it started, you may have surgery if you didn't have it before. If you did, chemoradiation, other surgery, and chemotherapy may be options.</li> </ul>	<b>46</b>
<b>Advanced cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advanced cancers can't be treated with local treatments. Instead, supportive care to prevent or reduce symptoms caused by the cancer is given. If you are healthy enough, you may receive chemotherapy.</li> </ul>	<b>48</b>

## What are the options for adenocarcinoma?

<b>Early cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endoscopic treatments are preferred for tumors confined to the first layer of the esophageal wall. When in the second layer, surgery to remove at least part of your esophagus is an option.</li> </ul>	<b>54</b>
<b>Invasive cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cancer has grown beyond the esophagus' second layer, spread to lymph nodes, or both. Chemoradiation is often used. Surgery to remove the cancer can be done in some cases.</li> </ul>	<b>58</b>
<b>Recurrent cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cancer has re-appeared on tests. For cancer near to where it started, you may have surgery if you didn't have it before. If you did, chemoradiation, other surgery, and chemotherapy may be options.</li> </ul>	<b>64</b>
<b>Advanced cancers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advanced cancers can't be treated with local treatments. Instead, supportive care to prevent or reduce symptoms caused by the cancer is given. If you are healthy enough, you may receive chemotherapy. Trastuzumab is a targeted therapy drug that is added to chemotherapy if the cancer cells have too many HER2s.</li> </ul>	<b>66</b>

## How do I decide between options?

Ask your doctors many questions. Also, you could get a second opinion, attend support groups, and compare pros and cons.	<b>72</b>
--	-----------

The NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ series and NCCN Guidelines for Patients® are supported by charitable donations made to the NCCN Foundation®. For more details and the full library of patient and caregiver resources, visit [NCCN.org/patients](http://NCCN.org/patients).

pay it forward



**DONATE NOW**  
[nccnfoundation.org](http://nccnfoundation.org)



**NCCN.org** - For Clinicians | **NCCN.org/patients** - For Patients