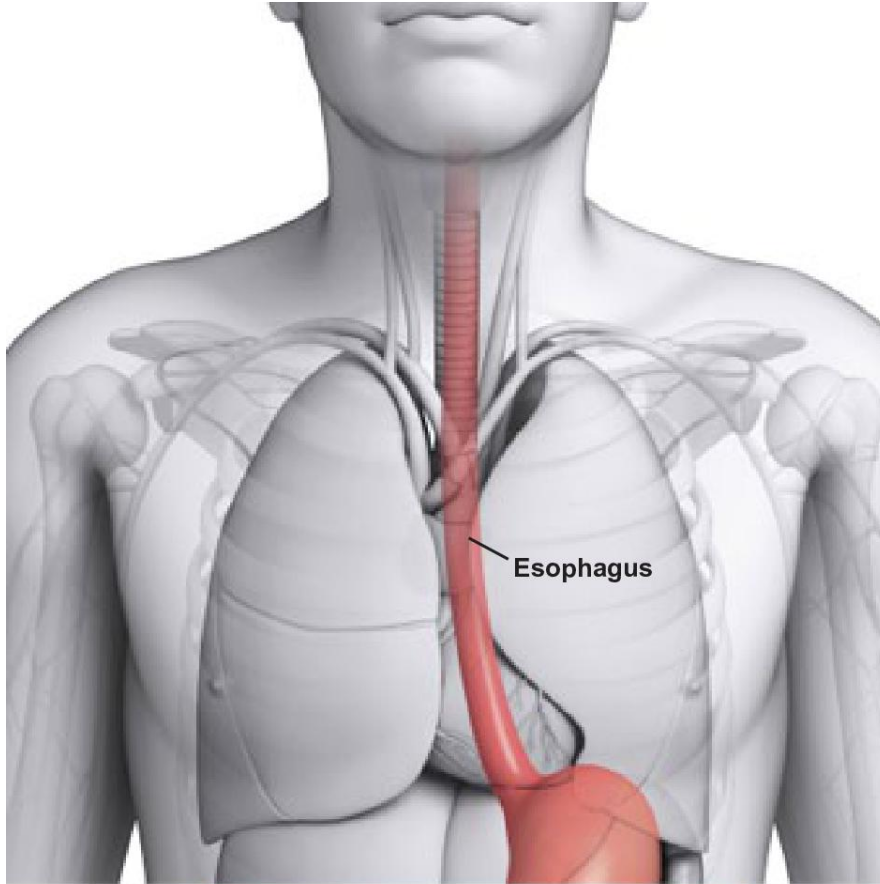




Esophageal Cancer



Overview

This type of cancer develops in your esophagus. The esophagus is the organ that carries food and liquids from your throat to your stomach. It is a muscular tube lined with specialized cells.

Causes

The cause of this cancer is not fully understood. It results from cell mutation. In the United States, it most commonly begins in the cells that secrete mucus to lubricate and protect the inner walls of the esophagus. This type of esophageal cancer usually forms in the lower part of the esophagus.

Risk Factors

You have a higher risk for this type of cancer if you drink alcohol or hot liquids. It is more common in smokers, and in people who are obese. A diet low in fruits and vegetables can increase your risk. Esophageal cancer is also more common in people who have conditions such as gastroesophageal reflux disease, achalasia and Barrett's esophagus.

Symptoms

Symptoms of esophageal cancer include difficulty swallowing, chest pain and heartburn. You may cough. Your voice may be hoarse. You may also lose weight unexpectedly.

Treatment

Treatment options depend on the type and stage of your cancer. You may benefit from surgery to remove cancerous tissue, which may include removing part of your esophagus. You may benefit from chemotherapy, radiation therapy or other methods. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.

