Esophageal cancer is the 7th most common cancer type and the 6th most common cause of cancer-related death around the world, disproportionately impacting Asia.

What Is Esophageal Cancer?

Esophageal cancer occurs when tumors form in the tissues of the esophagus, which is a muscular tube that moves food and liquids from the throat to the stomach for digestion.

Cancer Types & Incidence

The two most common types of esophageal cancer are squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC) and adenocarcinoma (EAC).

- **ESCC**: tumors generally form in the flat squamous cells lining the upper and middle parts of the esophagus.
- **EAC**: begins in the cells of the mucus-secreting glands in the esophagus, typically near the stomach.

Approximately 90% of esophageal cancer patients have ESCC. Approximately 10% of esophageal cancer patients have EAC.

Risk Factors

Risk factors for esophageal cancer may be behavioral, related to pre-existing or genetic conditions. Common risk factors include:

- Obesity
- Alcohol
- Tobacco Use
- Diet
- Barrett’s Esophagus
- Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease
- Genetics

Signs & Symptoms

Many esophageal cancers may not cause symptoms until they have reached an advanced stage. Symptoms may also be mistaken for conditions unrelated to cancer.

- Unintended weight loss
- Weakness due to anemia (from blood loss)
- Chest pain in the absence of heart disease
- Difficulty swallowing solid foods
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Coughing or hoarseness

Treatment Options

The main options for treatment of esophageal cancer include:

- Surgery
- Radiation Therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Targeted Therapy
- Endoscopic Treatments
- Immunotherapy

Asia accounts for about 80% of all esophageal cancer patients, with China accounting for over 50% of the global patient population.

- **North America**: 22,700
- **Europe**: 53,000
- **Asia**: 444,000
- **Central America**: 1,800
- **Africa**: 28,000
- **South America**: 17,300
- **Australia & New Zealand**: 2,000
- **Africa**: 28,000
- **Central America**: 1,800