

How can I reduce my risks of stomach cancer?



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AsiaOne

Q. How can I reduce my risks of stomach cancer?

A. Stomach cancer is [one of the top ten cancers](#) diagnosed in Singapore.

[According to SingHealth](#), the condition occurs when cancerous cells lining the inner wall of the stomach cause a mass to form within the stomach, or spread throughout the entire wall of the organ.

Studies have revealed that our diet may be a risk factor for stomach cancer, as high salt intake can damage the stomach lining and also increase the chances of cancerous cells developing over time.

Some of the foods associated with stomach cancer include salted fish, cured meat, and salted vegetables.

On the other hand, a diet high in fruits, vegetables and fiber has been found to help protect against stomach cancer.

The other known risk factors for stomach cancer are obesity and smoking.

High levels of N-nitroso compounds, found in our diet and tobacco smoke, are also linked with elevated risk for stomach cancer.

In addition, the [bacteria Helicobacter Pylori](#) is associated with the condition as it may cause chronic inflammation of the stomach, which may trigger the growth of cancer cells.

Stomach cancer is often diagnosed in the later stages as there are no specific symptoms.

Patients also tend to seek medical help only after enduring prolonged periods of discomfort.

Some signs and symptoms of stomach cancer include:

- poor appetite
- unintentional weight loss
- stomach ache
- vague discomfort above the navel
- sense of fullness after eating a small meal

- heartburn or indigestion
- nausea
- vomiting with or without blood
- swelling of the abdomen
- anaemia

If these symptoms persist, you should seek medical advice.

During diagnosis, your doctor may order an endoscopy to visualise the inside of the stomach, a biopsy to extract sample tissue for examination, or test for the presence of H.Pylori bacteria.

Although there are no specific guidelines on preventing stomach cancer, you can slash cancer risks by eating more fruits and vegetables, as well as cutting down on salt and processed meat.

Smoking cessation and maintaining a healthy weight also help to reduce cancer risks.

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