

# One STEP Ahead

## of head, neck and esophageal cancer



April | Join us by registering at: [ascension.org/GaviniCancer](https://ascension.org/GaviniCancer)

### Head and neck cancer

#### What are head and neck cancers?

Head and neck cancers are found in the nasal cavity, sinuses, lips, mouth, salivary glands, throat and larynx. These cancers usually begin in the squamous cells that line the moist surfaces inside the head and neck, such as the mouth, nose and throat.



#### Signs and symptoms vary depending on which area is affected, but may include:

- Mouth sores that do not heal
- Red or white patches in the mouth
- Lump, bump, or mass in the head or neck area
- Persistent sore throat
- Foul mouth odor not explained by hygiene
- Hoarseness or change in voice
- Nasal obstruction
- Blood in mucus

#### Risk factors include:

- Epstein-Barr virus
- HPV infection
- Smoking tobacco and/or marijuana:  
*Significant risk when combined with alcohol consumption*
- Alcohol consumption:  
*Significant risk when combined with smoking*
- Age:  
*Adults 40 and older are at a higher risk*
- Gender:  
*Two times more common in men than women*
- Poor dental hygiene
- Environmental and occupational inhalants
- UV light exposure and radiation
- Poor nutrition

# Esophageal cancer

## What is esophageal cancer?

The esophagus is a muscular tube connecting the throat to the stomach. Esophageal cancer forms in the tissue lining of the esophagus. There are two types of esophageal cancer — squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma.

## Signs and symptoms include:

- Difficulty swallowing
- Chest burning, pressure or pain
- Coughing or hoarseness
- Worsening indigestion or heartburn
- Unexplained weight loss

## Risk factors include:

- Age
- Gender
- Obesity
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol consumption
- Acid reflux (GERD) and Barrett's esophagus
- Diet with a high consumption of processed meats and extremely hot liquids
- HPV infection
- Achalasia, tylosis and certain other cancers
- Plummer-Vinson Syndrome (Paterson-Brown Kelly Syndrome)

## What can I do to help reduce my risk of esophageal cancer?

- Avoid tobacco and alcohol
- Get the HPV vaccination
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Increase physical activity
- Get treatment for acid reflux or Barrett's esophagus

## Next steps:

Learn more:  
*American Association  
for Cancer Research:  
Esophageal Cancer  
Awareness Month*



Register for the April STEP Ahead virtual seminar by scanning the QR code below or visiting [ascension.org/GaviniCancer](https://ascension.org/GaviniCancer). For more information, call 248-849-2781.



Ascension Michigan

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