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## What is **Gastrointestinal (GI) Cancer**

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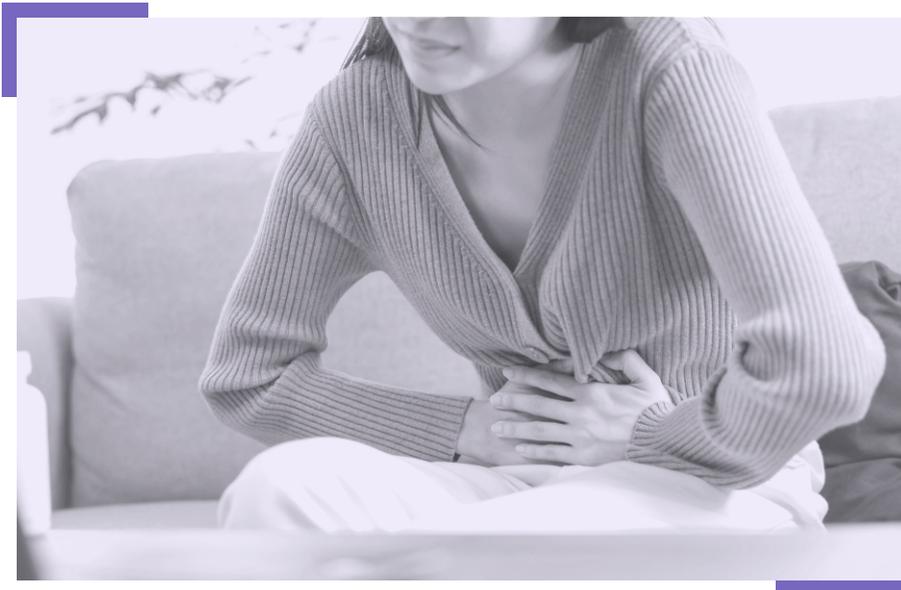
## Introduction

Gastrointestinal (GI) Cancer is a term that encompasses a group of cancers that affect the digestive system or the gastrointestinal tract.

## What are the types of Gastrointestinal Cancer?

The Gastrointestinal Cancer includes cancers of the following organs:

- Oesophagus
- Stomach
- Liver
- Pancreas
- Gallbladder
- Biliary Tract
- Small Intestine
- Colon
- Rectum



## Warning signs to look for

Symptoms of Gastrointestinal Cancer vary, depending upon the type of cancer. It may include:

- Abdominal pain, tenderness, or discomfort
- Sudden variation in bowel habits, such as consistency, frequency or shape
- Rectal bleeding or blood in the stool
- Bloating
- Fatigue
- Indigestion
- Feeling bloated after eating a meal
- Heartburn
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling in the stomach
- Constipation or diarrhoea
- Weakness or feeling tired
- Nausea / vomiting
- Yellowish eyes or skin
- Unintentional weight loss



## How Is Gastrointestinal Cancer Diagnosed?

Doctors conduct many tests to diagnose cancer and learn if the cancer has spread to another part of the body. Gastrointestinal Cancer is often diagnosed using the following tests:

- Endoscopic Examinations
  - Upper GI Endoscopy
  - Colonoscopy
- Barium Studies
- Imaging Studies
  - CT Scan
  - MRI Scan
  - PET Scan
  - Contrast Studies
- Diagnostic Laparoscopy

## What are the possible treatments for Gastrointestinal Cancer?

Some treatments to remove or cure cancer within the digestive tract and nearby tissues include:



## Surgical Process

There are three types of surgeries:

- **Endoluminal Laser Technology:** Removal of an early-stage tumour found in the digestive tract.
- **Open Surgery:** The GI Cancer indications are treated using conventional techniques.
- **Laparoscopic Surgery:** Minimally Invasive Surgery resulting in less operative morbidity and earlier return to normalcy.
- **Robotic Surgery:** Advanced robot-assisted surgical procedure performed using comparatively smaller tools and incisions. Helps to ensure lesser blood loss and better recovery.

## Radiation Therapy

It involves the use of high-energy waves to treat cancer cells and prevent local recurrence.

## Chemotherapy

It involves the use of chemotherapy drugs to treat cancer cells and prevent local recurrence.

## Targeted Therapy

This therapy targets cancer's specific genes, proteins, or the tissue environment that contributes to cancer growth and survival.



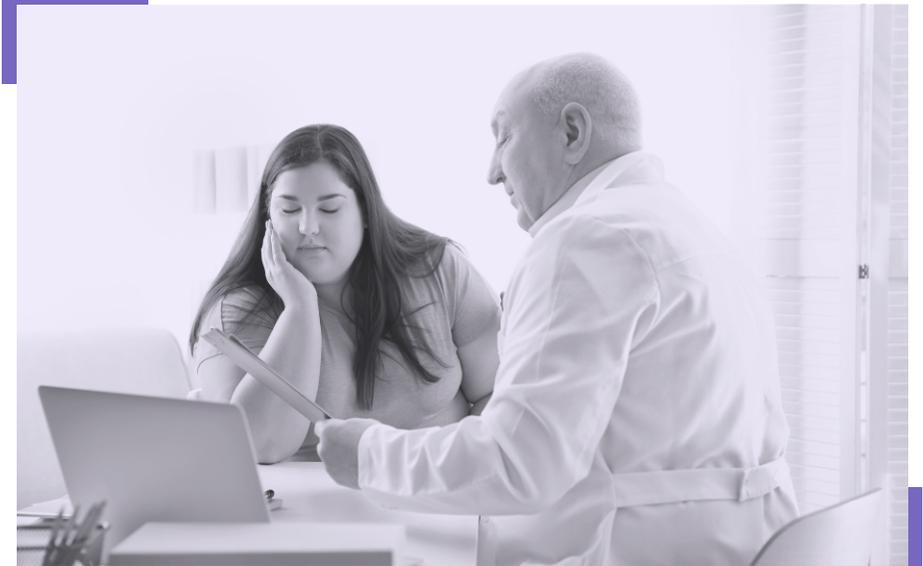
### Immunotherapy

This therapy involves the use of medicines that prompt the body's immune system or natural defenses to destroy cancer.

A patient might get chemotherapy, hormone therapy, or targeted therapy along with surgery or radiation. This multidisciplinary approach helps in treating the residual cancer cells, during other forms of treatment.

### What are the precautions one must take to avoid Gastrointestinal Cancer?

- Keep a healthy weight
- If you have ulcers from an H. pylori infection, get proper treatment for the infection
- If you take aspirin daily to prevent heart problems or NSAID drugs for arthritis, then talk to your doctor for its use
- Be physically more active; exercise for at least 30 minutes daily
- Eat healthy food and avoid too much alcohol consumption
- Avoid the use of tobacco and quit smoking



### Are there any risk factors involved?

Some of the major factors that lead to Gastrointestinal Cancer include:

- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Increasing age
- Diet high in animal fat
- Diets having a high amount of salt, or contain poorly preserved foods
- Chronic pancreatitis
- Obesity
- Stomach surgery for an ulcer
- Type-A blood group
- Epstein-Barr virus infection
- Certain genes
- Working in coal, metal, timber, or rubber industries
- Exposure to asbestos