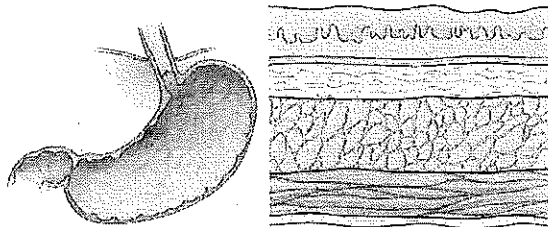


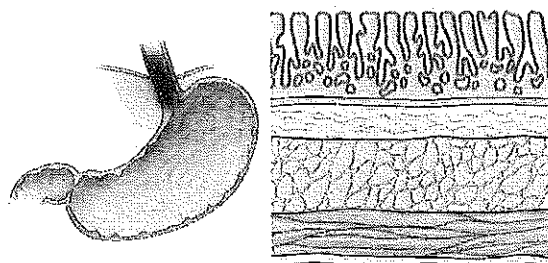
**BARRETT'S ESOPHAGUS**

# What Is Barrett's Esophagus?

- ▶ Having Barrett's esophagus means **the cells lining the esophagus** (the tube that links the mouth and the stomach) **have changed** into a type of intestinal cells that are not normal and increase the risk of long-term problems.
- ▶ Barrett's esophagus **does not cause symptoms that you can feel.**
- ▶ It is **found through an upper GI endoscopy and biopsy** (taking a small piece of tissue to look at under a microscope).
- ▶ The biggest worry with Barrett's esophagus is that **those who have it are at a slightly greater risk for a rare type of cancer** forming in the esophagus.
- ▶ While the true cause is unknown, having heartburn that doesn't go away could make you more likely to get Barrett's esophagus.



*Normal cells in the esophagus.*



*Barrett's esophagus.*



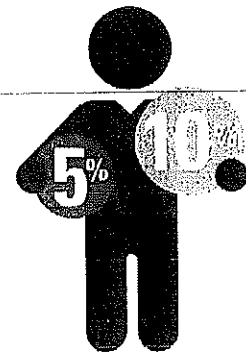
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## BARRETT'S ESOPHAGUS

# Risk Factors

Doctors do not know what exactly causes someone to get Barrett's esophagus. There are a few things, though, that doctors have found could raise the chances of getting it. If you are worried that you could get Barrett's esophagus, speak to your gastroenterologist.

- Men get Barrett's esophagus twice as often as women.
- Caucasian men get it more often than men of other races.
- The average age at diagnosis is 55 years old.
- **Between 5 and 10 percent of people with GERD (or reflux) get Barrett's esophagus.**
- Obesity — chiefly, high levels of belly fat — raises your chances of getting Barrett's esophagus.
- Smoking raises your chances of getting Barrett's esophagus.
- Some studies suggest that your genes may play a role in whether you get Barrett's esophagus.



*There are some things that may lower your chance of getting Barrett's esophagus, like a diet high in fruits and veggies, and working with your doctor to lessen acid reflux.*



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## BARRETT'S ESOPHAGUS

# Newly Diagnosed

Finding out you have Barrett's esophagus **can seem like a lot**, since the chance of future health concerns is higher. By **talking openly with your doctor**, you can gain the facts needed to **make choices that are right for you**. Getting equipped with knowledge can help you feel more in control.

### Things to Keep in Mind

- While you are at a higher risk for cancer than the general public, **the individual risk of cancer or death is still relatively low** (less than 1 in 200 patients with Barrett's esophagus will get cancer each year).
- Before the cancer grows, **your doctor can find pre-cancer cells and treat them**.
- Once Barrett's esophagus has been found, you should **have an endoscopy done at regular intervals**, suggested by your doctor, to look for pre-cancer cells (dysplasia).



### Questions for Your Doctor

- How often should I get an endoscopy?
- Are there ways I can lower my risk of getting cancer?
- Are there warnings that should cause worry?



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## BARRETT'S ESOPHAGUS

# Treatment

Since there are no true symptoms of Barrett's esophagus, you should **take care of the symptoms that are bothering you from GERD or reflux**, such as burning in your throat, a cough that won't go away, loss of your voice and an upset stomach. Only when your doctor confirms Barrett's esophagus should you think about specific treatments for it.

### Medication and Daily Habits

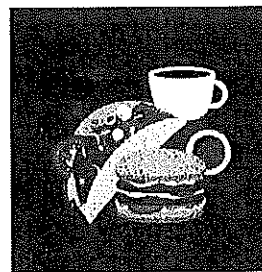
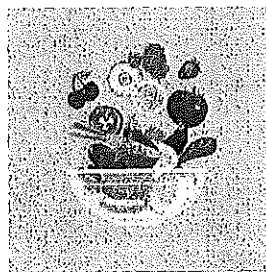
If you also have GERD along with Barrett's esophagus, your doctor will have you start or stay on drugs to hold back the acid in your stomach. You can get these medications through you doctor, though some can be accessed without a prescription. **Talk with your doctor about which choices are best for you before you take any medicines.**

You can also help reduce reflux by **staying away from certain foods** like:

- Chocolate.
- Coffee.
- Peppermint.
- Greasy or fatty foods.
- Spicy foods.
- Alcohol.

Try eating small, well-balanced meals throughout the day.

Eat lots of fruits and veggies.



Avoid coffee, chocolate and greasy foods.



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