ESOPHAGEAL CANCER Awareness Month

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TissueCypher
Barrett's Esophagus

Heartburn can cause cancer – know the facts:

A Growing Trend

- The kind of Esophageal Cancer caused by persistent heartburn or reflux disease is one of the fastest increasing cancer diagnoses in the Western world.
- Esophageal Cancer kills nearly 80% of those diagnosed, in large part because it's usually detected at late stages.

How the Disease Starts

- In most cases, reflux disease is to blame. Caustic fluids splash upward from the stomach of patients with reflux disease and damage the esophagus. Reflux disease can produce heartburn, persistent cough, hoarse voice or sore throat, even tooth erosion, but sometimes it is silent.
- Those fluids can cause precancerous changes in the lining of the esophagus.
- This condition is called Barrett's Esophagus. Only one out of 20 people even know they have it, largely because there are no symptoms. In some cases, this condition causes heartburn symptoms to get better, leading to a false sense of security.

Before It Becomes Cancer

- Barrett's Esophagus increases the risk for cancer. These patients are 25 times more likely to develop Esophageal Cancer than the average person.
- Once you have Barrett's Esophagus, no antacids or acid-blockers can undo the precancerous change
- Outpatient procedures that remove those cells can get rid of Barrett's and dramatically lower the risk of developing cancer.
- New tests can predict a Barrett's patient's risk of developing Esophageal Cancer.

Are You Or Someone You Love At Risk?

Consult your primary care doctor or gastroenterologist about screening if you have:

- ☐ persistent Heartburn or reflux symptoms
- ☐ had Heartburn symptoms that have gone away
- ☐ pain or difficulty swallowing
- ☐ a chronic, unexplained cough
- ☐ a hoarse voice over several weeks
- ☐ a long lasting sore throat
- ☐ coughing or choking upon lying down
- ☐ tooth erosion
- ☐ a family history of Barrett's Esophagus or Esophageal Cancer



ECAN
Esophageal Cancer Action Network

Learn more at *ecan.org*