



Gastrointestinal Cancers include:

- Anal Cancer
- Colorectal Cancer
- Esophageal Cancer
- Gallbladder Cancer
- Gastric Cancer
- Liver Cancer (Hepatoma)
- Pancreatic Cancer
- Small Intestine Cancers

The most prevalent of these is colorectal cancer in the Western world and gastric cancer in the Eastern world. About 630,000 deaths from colorectal cancer are expected this year worldwide, accounting for 8% of all cancer deaths. Gastric cancer accounts for approximately 800,000 deaths each year worldwide.

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From the American Cancer Society Global Cancer Facts and Figures: 2007

**Colorectal cancer** is the fourth most common cancer in men and the third in women. Worldwide, nearly 1.2 million cases of colorectal cancer are expected to occur in 2007. The highest incidence rates are found in Japan, North America, parts of Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. Rates are low in Africa and South-East Asia. Rates are substantially higher in men than in women.

About 630,000 deaths from colorectal cancer are expected to occur in 2007 worldwide, accounting for 8% of all cancer deaths. About 72% of cases arise in the colon and about 28% in the rectum.

The number of deaths from colorectal cancer has been dropping for the past 15 years. There are a number of likely reasons for this. One probable reason is that polyps are being found by screening and removed before they can develop into cancers. Screening is also allowing more colorectal cancers to be found earlier when the disease is easier to cure. In addition, treatment for colorectal cancer has improved over the last 10 years, allowing for more effective options for people with this diagnosis. Because of this, there are around 1 million survivors of colorectal cancer in the United States.

The 5-year relative survival rate for people whose colorectal cancer is treated in an early stage, before it has spread, is greater than 90%. But only 39% of colorectal cancers are found at that early stage. Once the cancer has spread to nearby organs or lymph nodes, the 5-year relative survival rate goes down, and if cancer has spread to distant organs (i.e., the liver or lung) the 5-year survival is less than 10%.” Relative survival rates for men diagnosed with colorectal cancer during 1982-1992 in five developing countries – China, Cuba, India, the Philippines, and Thailand – range from 28%-42%

**Stomach cancer (gastric cancer)** is expected to remain the fourth most common malignancy in the world in 2007, with an estimated one million new cases. Stomach cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men and the fourth among women. About 800,000 people worldwide are projected to die from stomach cancer in 2007.

**Liver cancer** is the fifth most common cancer in men and the eighth in women. An estimated 711,000 new liver cancer cases will occur in the world during 2007. More than 80% of these cases occur in developing countries, with China alone accounting for over 55% of the total. Rates are more than twice as high in men as in women. Liver cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death in men and the sixth among women. About 680,000 people worldwide are projected to die from liver cancer in 2007.

About 442,000 people will die from **esophageal cancer** in 2007, with 85% of these deaths occurring in developing countries. An estimated 529,000 new cases are expected to occur in 2007 worldwide. The incidence rates of esophageal cancer vary internationally by more than 50-fold. Highest rates are found in East and South Africa and Asia, including China and Central Asia. Lowest rates are found in Western Africa and Southeast Asia in both men and women and in the United States and parts of South America in women. This disease is three to four times more common among men than women.

([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org))

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**Gastric cancer** was once the second most common cancer in the world. In most developed countries, however, rates of stomach cancer have declined dramatically over the past half century. In the United States, stomach malignancy is currently the 14th most common cancer. Decreases in gastric cancer have been attributed in part to widespread use of refrigeration, Other factors likely contributing to the decline in stomach cancer rates include lower rates of chronic *Helicobacter pylori* infection, thanks to improved sanitation and use of antibiotics, and increased screening in some countries

Nevertheless, gastric cancer is still the second most common cause of cancer-related death in the world, and it remains difficult to cure in Western countries, primarily because most patients present with advanced disease.

(<http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/278744-overview>)

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Each year more than 30,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with adenocarcinoma of the pancreas and more than twice that in Europe. Most of these people will have passed away by the end of the first year. The incidence of pancreatic cancer increases with age; most people are between the ages of 60 to 80 when they receive the diagnosis. Men have tended to be over-represented, though in recent years the gap between men and women has shrunk, possibly due to increased cigarette smoking among women. In the U.S., pancreatic cancer is 9th or 10th most commonly diagnosed cancer (depending on gender), but the fourth leading cause of cancer death in men and women. The median survival period from the time of diagnosis until demise is arguably the worst of any of the cancers. The median survival for untreated advanced cancer of the pancreas is about 3 ½ months; with good treatment this increases to about six months.

**Pancreatic cancer** typically spreads rapidly and is seldom detected in its early stages, which is a major reason why it's a leading cause of cancer death. Signs and symptoms may not appear until pancreatic cancer is quite advanced and surgical removal isn't possible

[www.pancreatica.org/faq.html](http://www.pancreatica.org/faq.html)

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Although **anal cancer** is rare (comprising only 1.8% of all malignancies of the digestive tract), its incidence is on the rise. While the exact cause of anal cancer hasn't been determined, researchers have shown that it is highly associated with human papillomavirus (HPV) infection.

[www.medicinenet.com/anal\\_cancer/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/anal_cancer/article.htm)

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**Gallbladder cancer** is a relatively uncommon cancer. It has peculiar geographical distribution being common in central and South America, central and eastern Europe, Japan and northern India; it is also common in certain ethnic groups e.g. Native American Indians and Hispanics. Women are at higher risk of developing gallbladder cancer.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallbladder\\_cancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallbladder_cancer)

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“Patient Profile for Colorectal cancer: It is found most often in people aged 50 and older but any age possible.

Gender Profile for Colorectal cancer: It is a myth that this cancer affects mostly men. Women get colorectal cancer as often as men do (about a 1 in 20 chance).

Survival rate for Colorectal cancer: 47% survival rate for colon cancer in the UK 2001 (National Statistics – UK Government Census, 2001)

Average life years lost for Colorectal cancer: 13.4 years for colon/rectum cancer (SEER)<sup>1</sup> ([www.wrongdiagnosis.com](http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com))

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#### “Types of Colon Cancer

The type of colon cancer is usually defined by what kind of cell or tissue (collection of cells) it originates in. For example, the most common type of colon cancer is adenocarcinoma (literally, "cancer of a gland"). But colon cancer can begin in other types of cells, too. Colon lymphoma, which is rare but does occur, begins in a lymphocyte (lymph cell). Leiomyosarcoma of the colon, which is also rare, is a cancerous tumor that begins in one of the muscle layers of the colon. About 90-95% of all colorectal cancers are adenocarcinomas, with the remainder comprised of squamous cell, neuroendocrine or undifferentiated carcinomas.

#### Stages of Colon Cancer

There are five colon cancer stages (0-4). Colon cancer used to be rated using the Duke's system. For example, Duke's A cancer was the equivalent of stage 1 cancer. Sometimes you'll still hear people refer to their tumors that way, which can cause some confusion. This staging system reflects where the cancer went when no one was looking. In general, the earlier the stage, the easier the cancer is to treat.

#### Colon Cancer Treatment

There are three standard colon cancer treatments: surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy. Another potential option for some patients is immunotherapy. But, surgery is the most common treatment and is often combined with chemo/radiation to treat later-stage cancers.”

([www.about.com](http://www.about.com))

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