



# The Training Brief

## Quick Reference mini-training Topics Esophageal Cancer

*The purpose of this training topic is to understand the signs and symptoms of Esophageal Cancer*

### Discussion

**Fact:** Firefighters have a 62% higher risk of getting esophageal cancer according to the NIOSH research.

**Key Points:** Modify your risk factors and take the needed steps to reduce your risk for cancer.:

- Reduce alcohol use,
- STOP using tobacco products,
- Have a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. Avoid processed foods.
- Maintain a healthy body weight and increase physical activity.
- See your Physician regularly

**Action:** Firefighters need to take the steps to decrease their exposures:

- Wear SCBA from the start of the fire through overhaul.
- Perform Personal Exposure Reduction at every fire. Use wet wipes
- After every fire, shower within the hour
- Use Sun Screen
- Get annual medical exams
  - <https://firefightercancersupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Primary-care-cancer-evaluations-for-firefighters-HamrockMD-2016-FCSN.pdf>

**Make the necessary  
changes**

*Unfortunately, most esophageal cancers do not cause symptoms until they have reached an advanced stage, when they are harder to treat.*

*The most common symptoms of esophageal cancer are:*

- Trouble swallowing
- Chest pain
- Weight loss
- Hoarseness
- Chronic cough
- Vomiting
- Bone pain (if cancer has spread to the bone)
- Bleeding into the esophagus. This blood then passes through the digestive tract, which may turn the stool black. Over time, this blood loss can lead to anemia (low red blood cell levels), which can make a person feel tired.

### Risk Factors:

Not all esophageal cancers can be prevented, but the risk of developing this disease can be greatly reduced by avoiding certain risk factors:

- Age
- Gender
- Using tobacco products including chewing tobacco.
- Alcohol use
- GERD (Gastroesophageal reflux disease) People with GERD have a slightly higher risk of getting adenocarcinoma of the esophagus. This risk seems to be higher in people who have more frequent symptoms. But GERD is very common, and most of the people who have it do not go on to develop esophageal cancer.
- Barret's Esophagus: People with Barrett's esophagus are at a much higher risk than people without this condition to develop adenocarcinoma of the esophagus.
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- Diet
- Esophageal injury
- Diagnosed Conditions/Syndromes such as achalasia, HPV, Tylosis, Plummer-Vinson syndrome.
- Other Cancers such as lung, mouth, and throat cancer.

Source: American Cancer Society