

Smoking, drinking combo raises odds for esophageal cancer

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Study found having both unhealthy habits doubled risk of malignancy compared to having just one.

(HealthDay)—People who smoke and drink are nearly twice as likely to develop esophageal cancer as those with only one of those unhealthy habits, a new study indicates.

Previous research has shown that smoking and drinking are [risk factors](#) for [esophageal cancer](#), but this is the first study to show the risk associated with smoking and drinking combined, the investigators said.

The finding, which was based on an analysis of numerous databases, is published in the April 22 issue of *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*.

"Our study suggests that not only do alcohol and tobacco play an important role in the development of esophageal cancer, the combination of their use markedly increases their potency as carcinogens," study author Dr. Anoop Prabhu, of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, said in a journal news release.

"As a result, we as physicians should focus efforts directed at controlling the burden of esophageal cancer on those who consume both of these substances," Prabhu added.

This year, about 18,000 Americans will be diagnosed with esophageal cancer and more than 15,000 will die from the disease, according to the U.S. National Cancer Institute.

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more about [esophageal cancer](#).

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