

# Does where you live impact stomach cancer risk?

November 29 2017, by Steven Hochwald

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It's estimated that nearly 28,000 new cases of stomach cancer will be diagnosed in the United States in 2017. The good news is that this incidence rate is significantly lower than it was in the early 1900s. Stomach cancer currently accounts for about four cases diagnosed per 100,000 individuals—an almost tenfold drop from 35 cases per 100,000 individuals in the 1930s. The lower occurrence of this disease in the U.S. is likely due to better refrigeration and improved food handling, with less need for salting and smoking foods to preserve them.

The risk of developing stomach cancer is far greater in other countries. Globally, stomach cancer is a major health concern. It is the fifth most common malignancy and third leading cause of cancer-related death worldwide. Many Asian countries, including Korea, Japan and China, experience disproportionately [high rates](#) of stomach cancer, possibly due to high rates of [Helicobacter pylori](#) infection and the increased consumption of salted and smoked foods.

There are few signs and symptoms of early-stage stomach cancer. The symptoms that do occur are nonspecific, making it more difficult to detect and diagnose. Patients with more advanced stomach cancer may experience poor appetite, weight loss, upper abdominal pain, fullness after eating a small meal, nausea and anemia. Regardless of what country you live in, it's important to follow up with your physician if you're experiencing these symptoms. In addition to a diet heavy in salted and smoked foods, risk factors for stomach cancer include smoking and regular consumption of high-fat foods. Obesity is thought to be a risk

factor as well.

The medical community is working around the world to reduce [environmental risk factors](#) for stomach cancer, and also spreading awareness that many stomach cancers can be treated through a minimally invasive surgical approach. Here at Roswell Park, we're also advancing the search for better medical treatments, exploring new drugs in [stomach cancer](#) that modulate the immune system as well as targeting the glucose metabolic pathways which stimulate tumor growth. Our physicians use advanced endoscopic, laparoscopic and robotic approaches for either partial or total gastrectomy, depending on the need. Furthermore, we offer surgical tumor debulking with intraperitoneal chemotherapy for eligible patients with advanced gastric [cancer](#).

Provided by Roswell Park Cancer Institute

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