

Gastric Cancer and Types of Surgery

Surgical Oncology

The stomach is an organ in the digestive system that helps digest food. It is located between the esophagus and the small intestine. The walls of the stomach are made of muscles that churn and break down food into small pieces.

Gastric Cancer

Cancer develops when abnormal cells grow and form a mass. This mass is called a tumor. Tumors can be either benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

Gastric cancer is a disease in which cancer cells form in the lining of the stomach. The wall of the stomach is made up of several layers:

- Mucosal (innermost) layer
- Submucosal layer
- Muscularis (muscle) layer
- Subserosal layer
- Serosal (outermost, or external) layer

Surgery

Surgery is a common treatment for early stage gastric cancer. The operation is called a **gastrectomy**. During the gastrectomy, the surgeon may remove part or all of the stomach.

A **subtotal gastrectomy** includes removing the cancerous part of the stomach, nearby lymph nodes (tissue that filter infection and disease) and parts of other organs near the tumor.

A **total gastrectomy** involves removing the entire stomach, nearby lymph nodes and parts of the esophagus and small intestine. The esophagus is reconnected to the small intestine so the patient can continue to eat and swallow.