6 Symptoms of Stomach Cancer to Watch For

by LAURA JONES

Stomach Cancer Symptoms You Need to be Aware of

Are you or someone close to you having digestive issues? There are some symptoms that should not be neglected; instead, you should discuss them with your healthcare provider because they could indicate early stage stomach cancer symptoms. Of course, gastrointestinal issues and symptoms can be caused by various things, most of which are far less serious than stomach cancer, such as stomach viruses, ulcers, indigestion and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), to name a few. However, there are some symptoms commonly associated with stomach cancer that you should pay extra attention to.

Bloody Stool or Vomit

The attention of a healthcare professional is needed if you find blood in your stool, or you are vomiting blood. Blood that is found in your stool may appear maroon or tar-like. It may also be tar colored if you are taking iron supplements. Blood can also be present in vomit with the consistency and color of coffee grounds.

In either instance, you should seek treatment within a reasonable period. These symptoms should not be neglected. Your healthcare provider might ask you for a stool sample if blood is present. Always be sure to follow up with your doctor about the results of your tests.

Change in Appetite

You might find that you are very hungry, but then sit down to eat and find that your appetite is gone. After only a few small bites you feel very full, or maybe even bloated.

This change in appetite can also be accompanied by nausea or bloating as well. However, there are other conditions that can cause these symptoms, such the flu. If it persists, consult your doctor.

Unexplained Weight Loss

As a nurse, unexpected weight loss was one of the most common symptoms that I saw. When weight loss is occurring because of cancer, it is usually very noticeable and occurs within a short period of time.

Typically, patients will lose more than 20 pounds at a time. This happens without altering their diet, or normal exercise routine.

Heartburn or Indigestion

Heartburn or indigestion can also be a sign that your diet is out of whack. You might be eating too much greasy food, or foods that are too spicy. Look at what you're eating, as this could just be your eating habits.

Over-the-counter medications should help with heartburn and indigestion, but if those medications are not successful a physician may decide to place you a prescription strength medication.

Keep a food journal of everything you eat to take to your appointment. If heartburn and indigestion are frequent you should have a conversation with your doctor.

Dull Aching Above Your Navel

Even though dull aches near your abdomen are on this list, don't let your next stomach ache throw you into a panic attack thinking you have stomach cancer symptoms. The importance of listing this symptom is for you to pay attention to your body.

If you find that you are having pain in an area of concern, write it down and take notes to track it, describe it, and bring that information to your next appointment. Tracking your symptoms can help your doctor improve your care.

Change in Bowel Movements

Some folks can set their watches according to their bowel movements. If you are a person that is regular, but you find that you are missing bowel movements despite the help of over the counter supplements and increasing the fiber in your diet, you may want to express your concern to your healthcare provider.

On the flip side, if you are experiencing diarrhea or loose stools over a continued period, it could be concerning as well. Consistent bloating with any of the other symptoms could also raise a flag with medical professionals. This is the type of bloating that leaves your abdomen firm and round, and not just like you have eaten too much. In medical terminology, we would call that firm bloated abdomen distended.

Be Aware of Your Body

Again, these symptoms could very well be signs of other illnesses, but early detection and prevention is always key. If something doesn't feel right, make an appointment with your doctor. Even if stomach cancer is not suspected, you can get to the bottom of the true cause of your symptoms.

Get that yearly physical, any age appropriate preventative tests, and take time to take care of yourself. Schedule time to get those mammograms, colonoscopies, stress tests, and so on. You should also pay attention to symptoms that do not go away.

For instance, some examples would be heart burn or indigestion, or abdominal pain. Are you regular reaching for antacid? Pay attention to your body, because it could be trying to tell you something.

Do I Have Stomach Cancer?

Take the time to have a discussion with your doctor about what your experiencing. If going to the doctor makes you feel anxious, take a moment and write down your concerns. Have your symptoms or questions prepared, as it will lessen your anxiety and help you get the most out of your appointment.