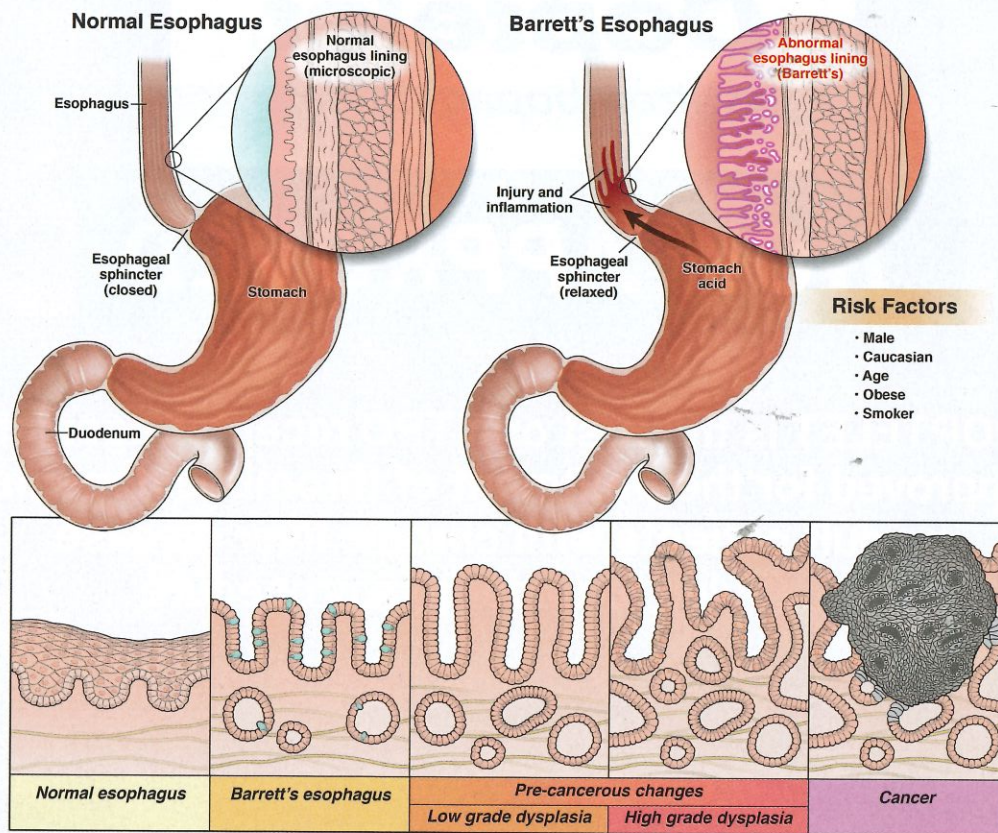


AGA Patient Education Section

Barrett's Esophagus



Barrett's esophagus occurs when the cells lining the esophagus (the tube that links your mouth and stomach) change into abnormal cells, increasing the risk of long-term problems. It does not cause any symptoms that you can feel, but it puts you at greater risk for a type of cancer that forms in the esophagus. The true cause is unknown, but there are a few things that could increase your chances of getting it, such as:

- Having heartburn that does not go away.
- Obesity.
- Smoking.
- Men, especially Caucasian men, are more likely to get it.
- Between 5% and 10% of people with gastroesophageal reflux disease get Barrett's esophagus.

Getting Tested

Getting an endoscopy and a biopsy is the only way to find out if you have Barrett's esophagus.

Treatment

Your gastroenterologist may suggest endoscopic surveillance to watch for any changes in tissue. He or she will routinely take a look at and remove tissue that could be signs of precancer or cancer.

If you have highly abnormal cells, or high-grade dysplasia, your doctor may suggest an endoscopic eradication therapy, which kills abnormal cells and can cause your body to start making normal esophageal cells.

Surgery also may help to remove some of the esophagus, called an *esophagectomy*. This is mostly a last-resort treatment.

For more information on Barrett's esophagus, talk to your gastroenterologist and visit <https://www.gastro.org/practice-guidance/gi-patient-center/topic/barrett-s-esophagus>.