

Metastatic Gastric Cancer (mGC)

What does “gastric” mean?

“Gastric” refers to the **stomach** (tummy), which is part of the digestive system, responsible for breaking down and absorbing food, along with the food pipe (esophagus) and intestines.¹

What is gastric cancer?

Gastric cancer is a type of gastrointestinal (GI) cancer that forms inside the **stomach** or **stomach wall** and is sometimes called stomach cancer. In most cases, gastric cancer begins in the cells in the inside lining of the stomach, which is known as adenocarcinoma of the stomach.²

What is mGC?

mGC, also known as **advanced, stage IV** or **secondary** gastric cancer, is a cancer that began in the stomach and has now **spread** to other parts of the body. mGC typically spreads to the liver, lungs, lymph nodes (help to fight infection), and the tissue lining of the abdominal cavity (where your organs are contained).³

What are the possible symptoms of mGC?

Symptoms of mGC will vary for each person, and you may get different symptoms at different periods or depending on where in your body it has spread to. Common mGC symptoms can include:⁴

feeling tired and generally unwell

black stools which contain blood

stomach pain

difficulty swallowing

unexplained weight loss

feeling and being sick

breathlessness.

Speak to your health care team if you notice these symptoms persisting or they are concerning you.

For more information on your metastatic GI cancer journey, including information on the emotional side of cancer, your health care team, living with a metastatic GI cancer, the role of patient organizations and peer support, and planning your future, please see the MyJourney patient brochure.

For further information on symptoms, treatment, and side effects, consult the ESMO Cancer Guide for mGC patients
<https://www.esmo.org/for-patients/patient-guides/stomach-cancer>

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7. Cancer Research UK. 2019. Chemotherapy treatment for stomach cancer. Available at: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/stomach-cancer/treatment/chemotherapy/chemotherapy-treatment> [Last accessed March 2022]
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Metastatic Gastric Cancer (mGC) – symptoms and treatment

MyJourney Program



How will my mGC symptoms be managed?

Symptoms of mGC can be challenging, but your health care team will offer support and treatment to help you feel more comfortable.

As well as medication for pain and sickness, there are **treatments** available that can help to shrink the cancer and relieve other symptoms. Other treatments can help to manage specific symptoms such as a blockage in the stomach, including:⁵



stents

(a small tube to keep passageways open)



removal

(of the blocking cancer cells)



surgery

(to bypass the stomach).

What treatments are available for mGC?

Every patient is different and treatment options will need to be discussed with a **range of health care professionals as part of a multidisciplinary team, sometimes known as a tumor board**. Treatment at this stage tends to focus on **keeping the cancer under control**, helping to prevent or relieve symptoms, and maintaining quality of life.⁶

If you are well enough, your treatment may include:⁶

- **chemotherapy** (a treatment that kills fast-growing cells, including cancer)
- **chemotherapy with radiotherapy** (radiation beams that kill the cancer cells)
- **targeted therapy**, including immunotherapy (a type of treatment that targets the changes in cancer cells that help them grow, divide, and spread)
 - You will have a biopsy (a sample of tissue taken from your tumor) to see if this type of treatment will work on your cancer.

If you are too unwell to have treatment, or choose not to, you will **receive palliative care**, which aims to manage your symptoms and improve how you feel (see page 46 in the MyJourney patient brochure for more details on palliative care).

Other treatments may also be available to you through **clinical trials** (see page 20 in the MyJourney patient brochure for more details on clinical trials).

You may also wish to seek a **second medical opinion**, depending upon your circumstances and considering the positives and benefits (see page 19 in the MyJourney patient brochure for more details).

What are the possible side effects of chemotherapy for mGC?*

The side effects of chemotherapy will **depend on the type of medication and the dose** used. Common side effects can include:⁷



feeling sick



feeling very tired



hair loss



loss of appetite and taste change



a lower resistance to infections



losing weight



bleeding and bruising easily



loose bowel movements (diarrhea) or constipation.

It is likely that you will get some of the side effects listed above, but you are very unlikely to have them all. Most are temporary and can be managed by medication or lifestyle changes. **Speak to your health care team as soon as you notice** any side effects and they will support you.

What is my outlook with an mGC diagnosis?

Outlook, or **prognosis**, will vary for each person with mGC and depends on many things. On average, around 40% of people with mGC will survive their cancer for 1 year or more after diagnosis.⁸ However, this is an average, and your doctor will be able to give you an approximate idea of what to expect.

You may also not wish to know your outlook; instead, you may **want only your loved ones to know your outlook** or only **how your symptoms may change over time**.

*Chemotherapy is most commonly used out of the three available treatments for mGC.