

Esophageal cancer occurs in $\sim 4.5/100,000$ people in the United States, with the associated mortality being $3.9/100,000$. It is ~ 10 times less common than colorectal cancer but kills about one-quarter as many patients. These statistics emphasize both the rarity and lethality of esophageal cancer. One notable trend is the shift of dominant esophageal cancer type from squamous cell to adenocarcinoma, strongly linked to reflux disease and Barrett's metaplasia. Other distinctions between cell types are the predilection for adenocarcinoma to affect the distal esophagus in white males and for squamous cell carcinoma to affect the more proximal esophagus in black males with the added risk factors of smoking, alcohol consumption, caustic injury, and human papillomavirus infection (**Chap. 80**).

The typical presentation of esophageal cancer is of progressive solid food dysphagia and weight loss. Associated symptoms may include odynophagia, iron deficiency, cough from tracheoesophageal fistula, and hoarseness from left recurrent laryngeal nerve injury. Generally, respiratory symptoms are manifestations of locally invasive or even metastatic disease. Even when detected as a small lesion, esophageal cancer has poor survival because of the abundant esophageal lymphatics leading to regional lymph node metastases.

Benign esophageal tumors are uncommon and usually discovered incidentally. They include gastrointestinal stromal tumors, leiomyoma, fibrovascular polyps, squamous papilloma, granular cell tumors, lipomas, mesenchymal neoplasms, and inflammatory fibroid polyps.

CONGENITAL ANOMALIES

The most common congenital esophageal anomaly is esophageal atresia, occurring in ~ 1 in 5000 live births. Atresia can occur in several permutations, the common denominator being developmental failure of fusion between the proximal and distal esophagus associated with a tracheoesophageal fistula, most commonly with the distal segment excluded. Alternatively, there can be an H-type configuration in which esophageal fusion has occurred,