

Gastric Cancer

Gastric cancer ranks the fourth killer among cancers in Hong Kong, with about 1000 new cases every year.

Food with high nitrite content, as well as salty, preserved and smoked food, may be closely related to gastric cancer. *Helicobacter pylori*, a bacterium found in 50% of the population in Hong Kong, is also found to have close relationship with gastric cancer.

Fresh fruits and vegetables help prevent gastric cancer as they are rich in vitamin C, minerals, and trace elements. On the other hand, deep-fried food should be avoided. Personal hygiene, such as washing hands frequently and avoiding contact with excreta and vomitus, is vital to stay away from *Helicobacter pylori* infection.

Symptoms of gastric cancer, including stomach-ache, black stool, and loss of appetite, weight and strength, may not be obvious in early stages. A tumour at the pylorus may cause vomiting while one at the cardia may cause difficulties in swallowing.

Surgery is the most important and potentially curative treatment for gastric cancer. Recently, pre-operative (neoadjuvant) chemotherapy has been used to reduce the size of the gastric tumour, so that the surgery can be allowed. Meanwhile, minimally invasive surgery has been put to clinical use. It is currently used for patients in early stage which can substantially reduce the size of the wound and shorten recovery time.