

Facts About Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumors (GIST)

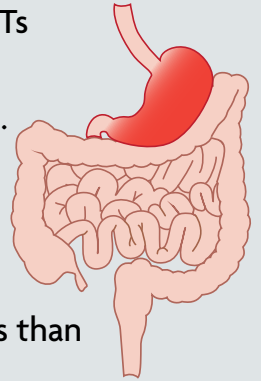
Who Gets GIST?

- 5,000-6,000 people in the U.S. get a GIST diagnosis each year.
- It's very rare to get GISTs if you're younger than 40 years old.
- You're at a higher risk of getting GIST if you're over 50 and have a tumor disorder such as familial GIST syndrome, neurofibromatosis type 1, or Carney-Stratakis syndrome.



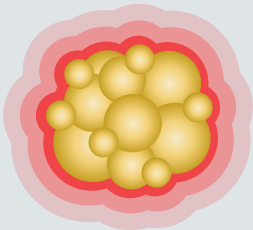
Where Does GIST Appear?

- The most common place GISTs grow is in the stomach. Over half of all GISTs appear there. Most of the rest happen in the small intestine.
- About 5% of GISTs appear in the colon and rectum. Less than 1% form in the esophagus.
- Rarely, some GISTs grow outside the GI tract. They can appear in the fat or lining that surrounds your internal organs in your belly area.



What Affects GIST Growth?

- How fast your GIST grows depends on several things, including how big it is, where it is in your GI tract, and how fast its cells are dividing (its mitotic rate).



What Are GIST Treatment Options?

- The main treatment for GIST is surgery to remove the tumor. This treatment only works if the GIST is not too large or has not spread to other parts of the body.
- Another treatment option is targeted therapy. It can shrink the tumor or stop it from growing. These drugs work differently than chemotherapy, which usually doesn't work on GISTs.
- For GISTs that have spread, doctors may try to remove them where they are. If they've spread to the liver, they can do a procedure called ablation and embolization, using heat, cold, or chemicals to destroy the tumors.



Reviewed by Melinda Ratini DO, MS, on December 15, 2022

SOURCES: National Organization for Rare Disorders: "Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumors." Cleveland Clinic: "Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor (GIST)." American Cancer Society: "Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor (GIST)." Yale Medicine: "Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumors (GIST)."