

If you have chronic acid reflux, you may be at a higher risk for complications like Barrett's esophagus. To identify precancerous changes in your esophagus that can develop with Barrett's esophagus, the board-certified gastroenterologists at Pioneer GI Clinic offer on-site endoscopy and other testing services. They also tailor treatment plans using minimally invasive procedures like radiofrequency ablation to destroy abnormal tissue and protect the health of your upper digestive tract. Call the office in Anchorage, Alaska, today to schedule an evaluation for Barrett's esophagus.

What is Barrett's esophagus?

Barrett's esophagus is a condition that develops from persistent acid reflux. When the backflow of stomach acid damages the lining of your esophagus, the tube that connects your mouth to your stomach, it may increase your risk for swallowing problems and esophageal cancer.

While the exact cause of Barrett's esophagus isn't well understood, people with chronic acid reflux or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) are more likely to have it. Other risk factors for Barrett's esophagus include:

- Age
- Family history
- Smoking history
- Weight challenges

Men are also more likely than women to develop Barrett's esophagus, especially Caucasian men.

Receiving early treatment for Barrett's esophagus lowers your risk for cancer and other complications.

When should I seek medical attention for Barrett's esophagus?

You should schedule a diagnostic evaluation for Barrett's esophagus if you have persistent acid reflux or GERD symptoms, including heartburn, swallowing difficulties, or chest pain.

You may also need an evaluation if you have a family history or other risk factors for Barrett's esophagus because not everyone will show symptoms of the disease.

The providers at Pioneer GI Clinic offer on-site endoscopy services to assess the health of your esophagus. During this procedure, they insert a scope with an attached camera into your throat. The scope allows the physicians to get a close-up look at the lining of your esophagus.

As part of your endoscopy, the providers can also take a sample of abnormal esophageal tissue for further testing at a lab to determine if there are precancerous or cancerous cells.

How is Barrett's esophagus treated?

If your tests show precancerous cells in the lining of your esophagus, the Pioneer GI Clinic may initially recheck your condition in a few months with another endoscopy. In other cases, the physicians may recommend that treatment start right away to prevent the spread of cancer.

The providers can use either radiofrequency ablation or cryotherapy to destroy precancerous or cancerous tissue in the esophageal lining. They also provide minimally invasive endoscopic resection procedures to remove damaged cells.

Because Barrett's esophagus can return, the physicians typically recommend regular checkups to evaluate the health of the esophageal lining.

To learn more about the available treatment options for Barrett's esophagus, call Pioneer GI Clinic today.