



April 2021

Dear Communities,

The VIVA Connects team hopes that you are all doing well, and finding ways to safely enjoy activities outside. This newsletter has been designed to easily provide the most current and accurate health information to you all, so that you may keep yourselves and your communities safe. Please feel free to share this information with community members and loved ones.



## April is Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month



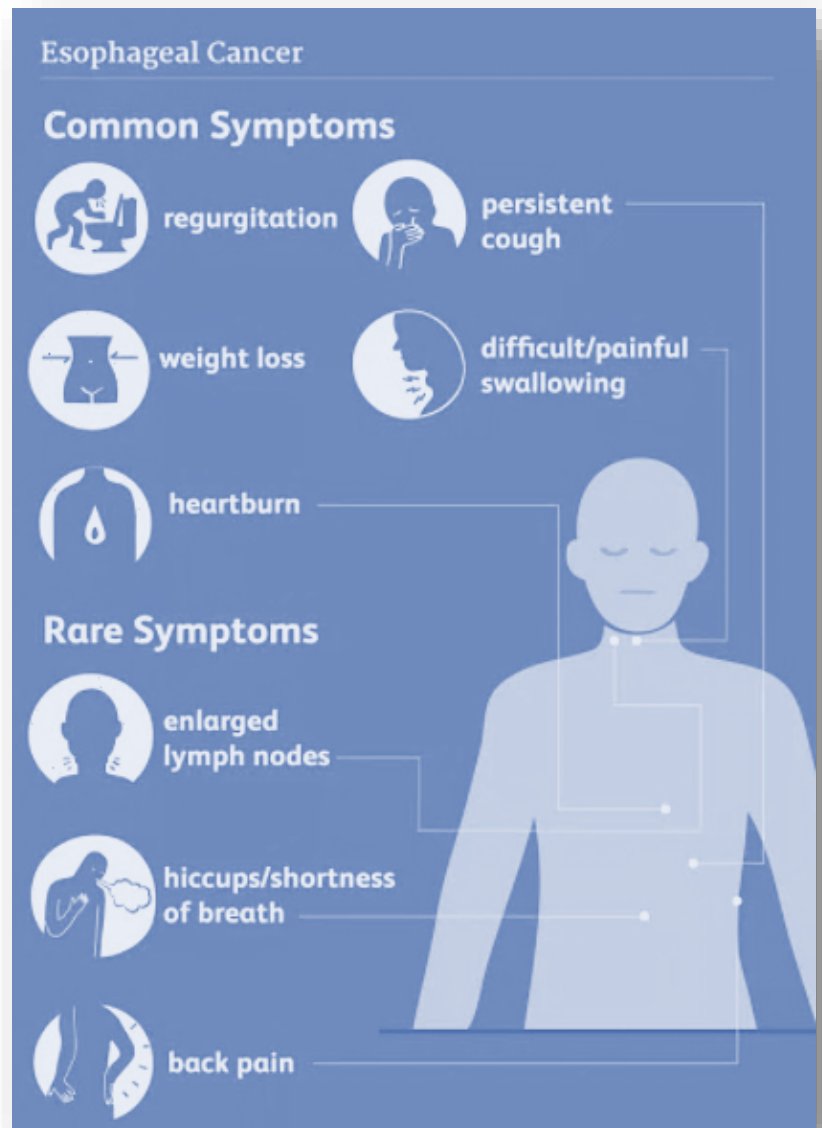
### What is Esophageal Cancer?

The esophagus is the hollow tube from the throat to the stomach where food and liquid travel down. The esophagus is made up of many layers of tissue, which is where cancerous tissue can form and even spread.

## Risks:

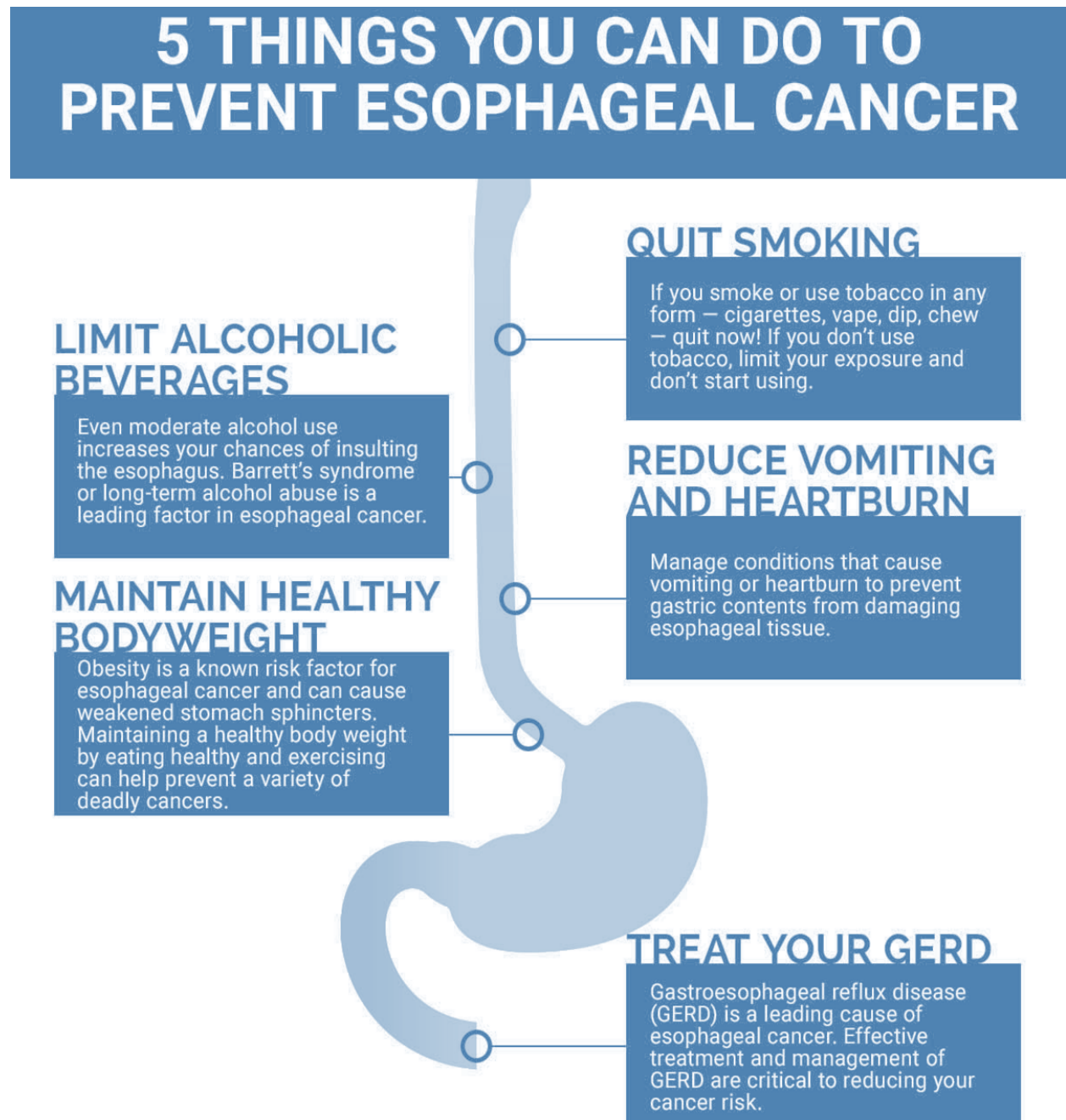
Risk factors that increase your chance of getting esophageal cancer are:

- Being male – men are 3x more likely than women to develop esophageal cancer.
- Age – 80% of cases are found in adults over the age of 55.
- Obesity – people who are overweight are more likely to develop esophageal cancer.
- Smoking – people who smoke are at a higher risk of developing esophageal cancer.
- Alcohol – people who consume more alcohol than is recommended are at a higher risk of developing esophageal cancer. (For more information about healthy alcohol consumption, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/moderate-drinking.htm#:~:text=To%2oreduce%2othe%2orisk%2oof,days%2owhen%2oalcohol%2ois%2oconsumed>)



## Prevention:

Here is an infographic showing the 5 ways to help reduce your risk of developing esophageal cancer. Make sure to talk to your provider about screening and preventative steps to keep your body healthy.

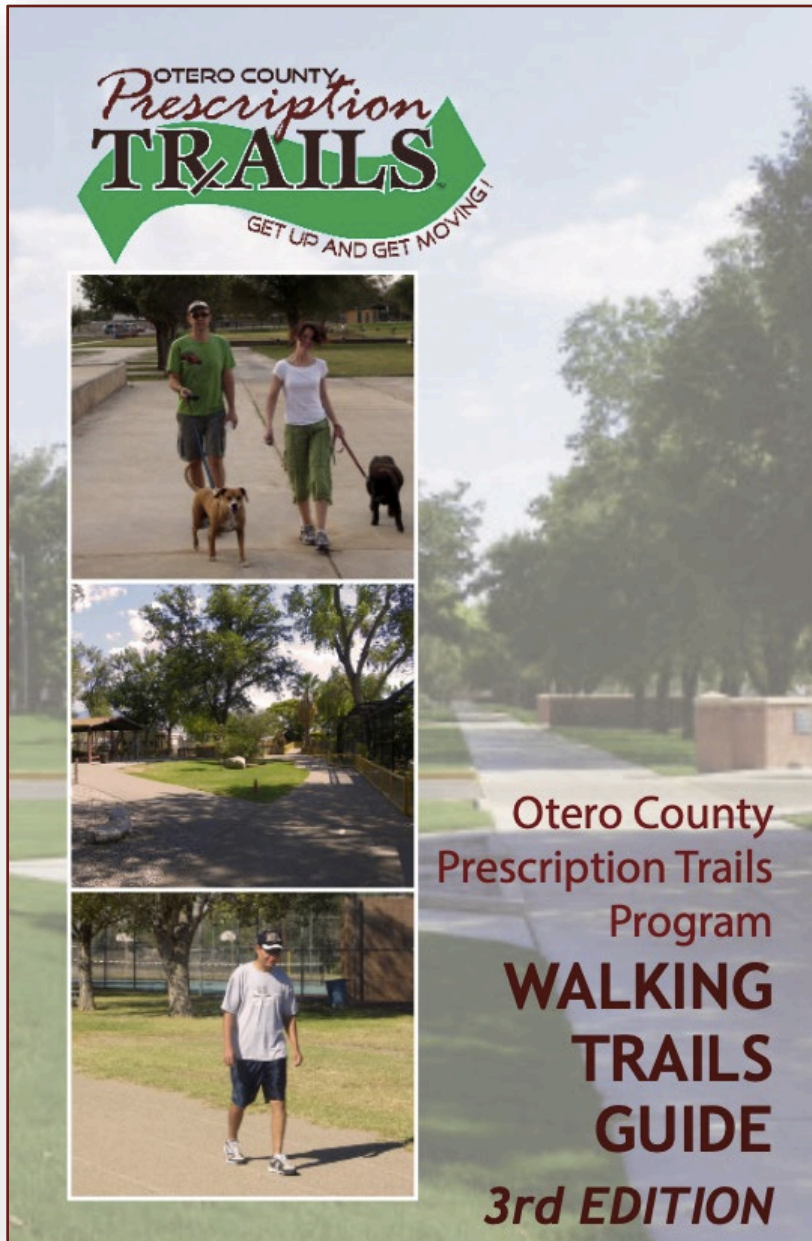


For more information visit:

<https://www.cancer.gov/types/esophageal/patient/esophageal-prevention-pdq>

## Community Highlight: Otero County Walking Guide

The Prescription Trails program is an initiative of *NEW MEXICO HEALTH CARE TAKES ON DIABETES*. Prescription Trails guides are available for many counties in NM, at: <https://prescriptiontrails.org/>



These guides identify walking and wheelchair rolling routes that are both safe and accessible to individuals, families, and pets. The guides offer a handy list and location for such trails, for the purpose of encouraging more physical activity and promoting healthy lifestyles. The founders designed this program with the idea that health care professionals and patients will work together to agree on the patient starting or increasing a walking routine (thus, the title includes "Prescription").

The stated Mission of Prescription Trails NM is:

*"To give all health care professionals tools to increase walking and wheelchair rolling on suggested routes, targeting and promoting healthy lifestyles for families.*




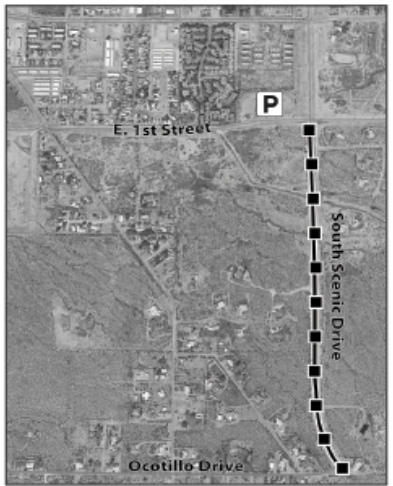
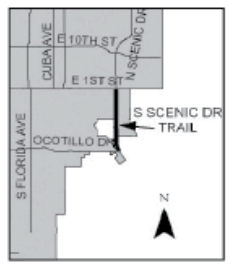
*To make sure that people engage in appropriate levels of physical activity, healthcare providers assess their patients for readiness to start or maintain a walking program and then write tailored prescriptions based on their current physical condition.*

*Walking programs can contribute to the treatment and prevention of a number of chronic conditions such as diabetes, depression and high blood*

*pressure."*



UNM PRC's VIVA Communities team, with support from NM Department of Health Comprehensive Cancer Program has worked with the NMDOH Otero Health Promotion Specialist and other local stakeholders, to update the Otero Prescription Trails Guide. Otero County is in south central NM and includes some beautiful public lands: White Sands National Monument and Lincoln National Forest.

<h3>South Scenic Drive </h3> <p>Trail Distance: 1 mile one way  Steps: 2,110 one way  Difficulty: Grade 2  Trail Surface: Concrete sidewalk, desert landscape on one side of the sidewalk  Lighting: No  Attractions: Stroller walking, pet friendly on leash, covered gazebo along route, wide panoramic view of the Tularosa Basin, mountain scenery including the Lady of the Mountain  Take caution: Use sidewalk, avoid using shoulder due to traffic</p> <p><b>Benefits of Physical Activity:</b> Lower risk of type 2 diabetes</p>   <p style="text-align: center;">16</p>	 <p><b>Nearby Major Cross Streets:</b> 1st Street and South Scenic</p> <p><b>Public Facilities and Amenities:</b> Trash cans and pet waste receptacles</p> <p><b>Parking:</b> Street parking</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">17</p>
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Developing the updated guide has held pleasant surprises by leading to several additional benefits. There has been an enhancement of an ADA-accessible ramp at the Washington Avenue Walking Path thanks to the City of Alamogordo. This guide will also help get out the word about a new scavenger-hunt style trail at Washington Park in Alamogordo. The guide should be published and available online this spring.

*-Maureen Schmittle  
Otero County Health Council and VIVA Connects member*

*Stay safe, mask up, and get outside!*

*Sincerely,*

*The VIVA Connects Team*

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