

Oesophageal cancer

Essential TNM

Key points for oesophageal cancer staging

1. The classification is for squamous cell carcinomas and aims to divide cancers into those that are operable (localized) and those that are not.
2. Metastasis is most common to the liver, lung, distant lymph nodes, and bone.
3. Regional lymph nodes are those in the oesophageal drainage area, including coeliac axis nodes and para-oesophageal nodes in the neck but not the supraclavicular nodes.
4. Look for tumour extension to adjacent organs (pleura, pericardium, azygos vein, diaphragm, peritoneum, aorta, vertebral body, trachea); the tumour is advanced (T4).

Fig. 1. Oesophageal cancer Essential TNM flow chart. A, advanced extension; L, localized extension; M, distant metastasis; R, regional lymph nodes; TNM, Tumour, Node, Metastasis.

