

ABOUT OUR FOUNDER



DEBBIE ZELMAN
1967-2017

In April 2008, when she was a forty-year-old mother of three young children, a wife, and a practicing attorney, Debbie was diagnosed with stage IV advanced, incurable stomach cancer. Her chance of surviving 5 years was only 4%. In the course of searching for treatment options, she quickly learned how difficult this disease is to detect and treat and that the outcome is often grim. Fortunately, working closely with her doctors in academic and community settings, Debbie began responding to treatment. She then decided to use her experience, skills, tenacity, and robust network of friends and supporters to start a movement to raise awareness about stomach cancer, fund research, and help other patients.

In April 2009, Debbie started Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF), the first 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to advocate for stomach cancer research funding. DDF quickly became the leading voice for stomach cancer advocacy and is currently the international leader for this under-recognized and under-funded disease. Debbie passed away on December 23, 2017, after nearly a decade of fighting fearlessly on behalf of stomach cancer patients, families, and caregivers worldwide. Her legacy lives on through DDF and all those who support her dream of making the cure for stomach cancer a reality.

TOGETHER WE ARE DREAMING BIG!

DDF depends on the generosity of people like you. Your tax-deductible contribution supports our programs and enables us to fund research. Help us make the dream of finding a cure for stomach cancer a reality!



Visit www.DebbiesDream.org to donate, learn more about this devastating disease, learn how to become involved, ask questions, volunteer, host or attend an event, become a mission ambassador, and/or purchase merchandise.

Please give today and support our cause!

Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer

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Find Us On:

Facebook: [DebbiesDreamFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/DebbiesDreamFoundation)

Twitter: [StomachCancer_](https://twitter.com/StomachCancer_)

LinkedIn: [DebbiesDreamFoundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/DebbiesDreamFoundation)

YouTube: [CuringStomachCancer](https://www.youtube.com/CuringStomachCancer)

Instagram: [DebbiesDreamFoundation](https://www.instagram.com/DebbiesDreamFoundation)



Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF) is dedicated to raising awareness about stomach cancer, advancing funding for research, and providing education and support internationally to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF seeks as its ultimate goal to make the cure for stomach cancer a reality!

**Pioneering the fight
against stomach cancer
worldwide!**



STOMACH CANCER FACTS

What is Stomach Cancer?

- Stomach cancer, also known as gastric cancer, forms in the tissues lining the stomach.
- **2024 Statistics:**
 - Estimated diagnoses: 26,890 Americans
 - Estimated deaths: 10,880 Americans
 - Fifth-leading type of cancer and the third-leading cause of death from cancer globally

Diagnosing Stomach Cancer

- **Challenges:**
 - Up to 80% of patients are asymptomatic during early stages.
 - Symptoms such as indigestion, heartburn, and nausea can be mistaken for other gastric problems.
- **Impact:** Delayed diagnosis often leads to significant morbidity and high mortality

Stomach Cancer Survival Rates

- Overall 5-Year Relative Survival Rate: 36%.
- Late Stage (Distant) 5-Year Survival Rate: 7%.

Alarming Trends

- **Young Adults:** Increased incidence in young adults, especially young women
- **Disparities:** Significant differences in disease burden across various populations

Risk Factors

Primary Causes:

- Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) Infection: Major identified cause

Additional Risk Factors:

- Chronic gastritis
- Certain diets
- Smoking
- **Family history** - Approximately 10% are linked to hereditary genetic syndromes.

Global Statistics

- **Prevalence and Mortality:** 1.1 million new cases in 2020, making it the fifth most common cancer and the fourth leading cause of cancer death globally, with 800,000 deaths.
- **Regional Impact:** Over 85% of cases are in high Human Development Index countries, with Asia having the highest incidence—820,000 new cases and 580,000 deaths.

DDF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Educate stomach cancer patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare professionals through free informational materials, webinars, and symposia
- Raise awareness about the reality of a stomach cancer diagnosis and the toll it takes on patients and their families
- Provide no-cost support and objective, reliable information about treatment options, ongoing research, and clinical trials
- Fund research directly and through focused advocacy efforts to increase federal funding
- Serve as the primary resource for health care professionals to refer their stomach cancer patients
- Encourage collaboration and information sharing among medical professionals, researchers, scientists, pharmaceutical companies, public agencies, and patients
- Promote health equity and help shed light on health care disparities in populations disproportionately affected by gastric cancer

Stomach cancer incidence and mortality (2016-2020) rates by race. *

	White	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Hispanic/ Latinx
Incidence Male	7.1 (7.2)	13.0 (13.0)	11.8 (12.2)	13.1 (12.5) †	11.4 (11.6)
Incidence Female	3.4 (3.4)	7.4 (7.4)	6.9 (7.2)	7.8 (7.5) †	7.7 (7.8)
Deaths Male	2.9 (2.9)	7.2 (7.2)	6.0 (5.9) †	7.7 (7.5) †	5.9 (5.9)
Deaths Female	1.5 (1.5)	3.5 (3.5)	3.7 (3.7)	4.1 (4.0) †	3.9 (3.9)

Numbers in parenthesis reflect previous report of stomach cancer incidence (2015-2019) and mortality (2016-2020) rates. Rates are per 100,000 persons and are age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.



* American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2024. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2024. <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/all-cancer-facts-figures/2024-cancer-facts-figures.html>

Raising Awareness. Funding Research. Supporting Patients. Achieving the DREAM!

DDF MILESTONES

- **2011:** Hosted the first Stomach Cancer Patient Education Symposium, now an annual event with global reach featuring expert lectures. Available online at our website.
- **2013:** Initiated the first stomach cancer Capitol Hill Briefing in Washington, DC, leading to the Annual Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day. Efforts have significantly increased federal research funding.
- **2014:** Partnered with the American Association of Cancer Research, funding over \$1.4 million in stomach cancer research and fostering opportunities for young researchers
- **2024:** Formed an international partnership with KIBOUNOKAI in Japan to enhance stomach cancer education and support in the Japanese and Asian communities.
- **2024:** Established a groundbreaking \$551,880 fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center for early career researchers in esophageal and gastric cancers.



\$551,880 fellowship for gastric cancer researchers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center



\$1.4 million in research grants in partnership with AACR American Association for Cancer Research



Held first-ever stomach cancer Capitol Hill Briefing in Washington, DC

