

[Sarcomas of Specific Organs - Risk Factors](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 07/2014

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about the factors that increase the chance of developing a soft tissue sarcoma. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

A risk factor is anything that increases a person's chance of developing cancer. Although risk factors often influence the development of cancer, most do not directly cause cancer. Some people with several risk factors never develop cancer, while others with no known risk factors do. However, knowing your risk factors and talking about them with your doctor may help you make more informed lifestyle and health care choices.

Most sarcomas do not have a known cause. However, the following factors can raise a person's risk of developing sarcoma:

Previous radiation therapy. People who have received radiation therapy as treatment for a previous cancer have a slightly increased risk of developing a sarcoma later in life. Sometimes it is an angiosarcoma that develops, but osteosarcoma and undifferentiated pleomorphic sarcoma may also be diagnosed.

Genetics. People with certain inherited diseases, such as [neurofibromatosis type I](#) [3], [Gardner syndrome](#) [4], [Werner syndrome](#) [5], [tuberous sclerosis syndrome](#) [6], [nevoid basal cell carcinoma syndrome](#) [7], [Li-Fraumeni syndrome](#) [8], and a specific form of [retinoblastoma](#) [9], have a higher risk of sarcoma.

Chemicals. Workplace exposure to vinyl chloride monomer, which is used in making some types of plastics, or to dioxin may increase the risk of angiosarcoma. However, most sarcoma is not known to be associated with specific environmental hazards.

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