

## **Bladder Cancer - Risk Factors [1]**

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 06/2015

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will find out more about the factors that increase the chance of developing this type of cancer. 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.

The following factors may raise a person's risk of developing bladder cancer:

- **Tobacco use.** The most common risk factor is cigarette smoking, although smoking cigars and pipes can also raise the risk of developing bladder cancer. Smokers are four to seven times more likely to develop bladder cancer than nonsmokers. Learn more about [tobacco's link to cancer and how to quit smoking](#) [3].
- **Age.** The likelihood of being diagnosed with bladder cancer increases with age. More than 70% of people with bladder cancer are older than 65 years old.
- **Gender.** Men are three to four times more likely to develop bladder cancer than women, but women are more likely to die from bladder cancer than men. Before smoking rates for women increased, men were five to six times more likely to develop bladder cancer than women.

- **Race.** White people are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with bladder cancer as black people, but black people are twice as likely to die from the disease.
- **Chemicals.** Chemicals used in the textile, rubber, leather, dye, paint, and print industries; some naturally occurring chemicals; and chemicals called aromatic amines can increase the risk of bladder cancer.
- **Chronic bladder problems.** Bladder stones and infections may increase the risk of bladder cancer. Bladder cancer may be more common for people who are paralyzed from the waist down and have had many urinary infections.
- **Cyclophosphamide (Cytosan, Clafen, Neosar) use.** People who have taken the chemotherapy drug cyclophosphamide have a higher risk of developing bladder cancer.
- **Pioglitazone hydrochloride (Actos) use.** In 2011, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned that people who have taken the diabetes drug pioglitazone hydrochloride for more than one year may have a higher risk of developing bladder cancer. However, published studies have shown contradictory results.
- **Personal history.** People who have already had bladder cancer once are more likely to develop bladder cancer again.
- **Schistosomiasis.** People who have some forms of this parasitic disease, which is found particularly in parts of Africa and the Mediterranean region, are more likely to develop bladder cancer.
- **Arsenic exposure.** Arsenic is a naturally occurring substance that can cause health problems if consumed in large amounts. When found in drinking water, it has been associated with an increased risk of bladder cancer. The chance of being exposed to arsenic depends on where you live and whether you get your water from a well or from a system that meets the standards for acceptable arsenic levels.

The [next section in this guide is Symptoms and Signs](#) [4], and it explains what body changes or medical problems this disease can cause. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/bladder-cancer/risk-factors>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25002>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18524>