

## **Sarcoma - Kaposi - Risk Factors and Prevention** [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 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 can raise a person's risk of developing Kaposi sarcoma:

**Ethnicity.** People of Jewish or Mediterranean descent, as well as equatorial Africans, have a higher risk of developing Kaposi sarcoma.

**Gender.** Men have a higher risk of developing Kaposi sarcoma than women.

**Human herpesvirus 8 (HHV-8).** Infection with this virus, also called the Kaposi sarcoma herpesvirus (KSHV), may cause Kaposi sarcoma. Most people infected with HHV-8 do not develop Kaposi sarcoma; the cancer appears most often when a person with HHV-8 also has a decline in their overall immune system function.

**Immune deficiency.** People with HIV/AIDS and people whose immune systems are suppressed following organ transplantation have a higher risk of developing Kaposi sarcoma.

**Sexual activity.** Homosexual men have a higher risk of infection with HHV-8, as well as HIV. Learn more about [HIV/AIDS-related cancer](#) [3]

Research continues to look into what factors cause this type of cancer and what people can do to lower their personal risk. While there is no proven way to completely prevent Kaposi sarcoma, a person can significantly reduce his or her risk by avoiding the known risk factors for HIV/AIDS infection, especially by avoiding risky sexual practices, such as having unprotected sex, and using intravenous (IV) needles that have been used by someone else. Talk with your doctor if you have concerns about your personal risk of developing this type of cancer.

*To continue reading this guide, use the menu on the side of your screen to select another section.*

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/sarcoma-kaposi/risk-factors-and-prevention>

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

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/31289>