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Sarcoma - Kaposi - Risk Factors and Prevention [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 03/2016

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.

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).** This virus, also called the Kaposi sarcoma herpesvirus (KSHV), may cause Kaposi sarcoma. However, most people with HHV-8 do not develop Kaposi sarcoma. The cancer appears most often when a person with HHV-8 also has impaired 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.** Men who have sex with men have a higher risk of infection with HHV-8 as well as HIV. Learn more about HIV/AIDS-related cancer [3].

Prevention

Different factors cause different types of cancer. Researchers continue to look into what factors cause this type of cancer. Although there is no proven way to completely prevent Kaposi sarcoma, you can significantly lower your 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 for more information about your personal risk of Kaposi sarcoma.

The next section in this guide is Symptoms and Signs [4]*. It explains what body changes or medical problems this disease can cause. Or, use the menu to choose another section to continue reading this guide.*

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/18928
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/18959