

[Leukemia - Acute Myeloid - AML - Risk Factors](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 01/2016

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about the factors that increase the chance of developing AML. 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.

Although the cause of AML is not known, several factors are associated with an increased risk of the disease. The following factors may raise a person's risk of developing AML:

- **Age.** AML is more common in older adults, but it occurs at all ages. About half of people with AML are older than 65 when diagnosed.
- **Smoking.** The risk of AML has been linked to exposure to [tobacco smoke](#) [3], probably along with other causes.
- **Genetic disorders.** Increasingly, researchers are finding that leukemia may run in a family due to inherited gene mutations. AML occurs more often in people with the following inherited disorders:

- Down syndrome
 - [Ataxia telangiectasia](#) [4]
 - [Li-Fraumeni syndrome](#) [5]
 - Klinefelter syndrome
 - Fanconi anemia
 - Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome
 - Bloom syndrome
 - Familial Platelet Disorder syndrome
- **High doses of radiation.** People who have been exposed to high levels of radiation, such as long-term survivors of atomic bombs, may be more likely to develop AML. Electromagnetic fields generated by high-voltage electrical power lines have not been shown to cause AML.
 - **Previous cancer treatment.** People who have received chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy for other types of cancer, such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and lymphoma, have a higher risk of developing AML in the years following treatment.
 - **Chemicals.** Long-term contact with products containing the chemical benzene, found in petroleum, cigarette smoke, and industrial workplaces, raises the risk of AML. However, exposure to industrial solvents and hair dyes has not been proven to increase a person's risk of AML.
 - **Other bone marrow disorders.** People who have other bone marrow diseases including myeloproliferative disorders can develop AML over time. Myelo- means bone marrow and proliferative means too much. These conditions include:
 - Polycythemia vera

- Myelofibrosis
- Essential thrombocytosis
- [Myelodysplastic syndromes](#) [6]

The [next section in this guide is Symptoms and Signs](#) [7]. 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/leukemia-acute-myeloid-aml/risk-factors>

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

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

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18502>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19133>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/31399>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19069>