

Leukemia - Acute Myeloid - AML - Risk Factors [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 11/2014

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 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.

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. AML occurs more often in people with inherited disorders such as Down syndrome, [ataxia telangiectasia](#) [4], [Li-Fraumeni syndrome](#) [5], Klinefelter syndrome, Fanconi anemia, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome, Bloom syndrome, and the 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 (myelo- means bone marrow and proliferative means too much), such as polycythemia vera, myelofibrosis, and essential thrombocytosis, as well as myelodysplastic syndromes [6] can have their conditions turn into AML over time.

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

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>