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Lymphoma - Hodgkin - Risk Factors [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 06/2014

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 exact cause of Hodgkin lymphoma is not known, but the following factors may raise a person?s risk of developing Hodgkin lymphoma:

Age. People between the ages of 15 and 40 and people older than 55 are more likely to develop Hodgkin lymphoma.

Gender. In general, men are slightly more likely to develop Hodgkin lymphoma than women, although the nodular sclerosis subtype is more common among women.

Family history. Brothers and sisters of people with Hodgkin lymphoma have a higher chance of developing the disease, although this increased risk is small.

Virus exposure. People who have been infected with the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), the virus that causes infectious mononucleosis or "mono," may be at increased risk for developing some types of Hodgkin lymphoma. About 20% to 25% of people with cHL in the United States and Western Europe have had an infection with EBV. However, the role of EBV in the development of Hodgkin lymphoma is not yet clear. There are probably several other factors involved, as EBV is a very common disease, but Hodgkin lymphoma is very uncommon. People with the human immunodeficiency virus [3] also have a higher risk of developing Hodgkin lymphoma, particularly lymphocyte-depleted Hodgkin lymphoma (see the Overview [4] section).

It is important to note that, although viruses may be involved in the development of Hodgkin lymphoma, there is no evidence that this type of cancer is contagious. Close contact with someone with Hodgkin lymphoma does not increase a person?s risk of developing the disease.

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

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