Stomach Cancer - Risk Factors

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Risk Factors

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about what factors increase the chance of this type of cancer. To see other pages in this guide, use the colored boxes on the right side of your screen, or click ?Next? at the bottom.

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 may raise a person?s risk of developing stomach cancer:

Age. Stomach cancer occurs most commonly in people older than 55. Most people diagnosed with stomach cancer are in their 60s and 70s.

Gender. Men have twice the risk of developing stomach cancer, compared with women.

Family history/genetics. People who have a parent, child, or sibling who has had stomach cancer are at increased risk. In addition, certain inherited genetic disorders, such as hereditary diffuse gastric cancer [2], hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer [3] (HNPCC or Lynch syndrome), and familial adenomatous polyposis [4] (FAP) may increase the risk of stomach cancer. Learn more about genetics and cancer [5].

Race. Black people are more likely than white people to develop stomach cancer.

Diet. Eating foods preserved by drying, smoking, salting, or pickling may increase the risk of stomach cancer. Eating fresh fruits and vegetables may help lower the risk.

Bacteria. A common bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori*, also called *H. pylori,* which causes stomach inflammation and ulcers, may increase the risk of stomach cancer. However, most people with *H. pylori* never develop stomach cancer.

Previous surgery or health conditions. People who have had stomach surgery or have pernicious anemia (a severe decrease in red blood cells that occurs when the body does not have enough B12, which is usually because the stomach?s is not able to properly absorb the vitamin) or achlorhydria (a lack of hydrochloric acid in the gastric juices, which help digest food) have an increased risk of stomach cancer.

Occupational exposure. Exposure to certain dusts and fumes may increase the risk of developing stomach cancer.

Tobacco and alcohol. Tobacco use [6] and excessive alcohol consumption [7] may increase the risk of developing stomach cancer.

Obesity. Excess body weight increases a man?s risk of developing stomach cancer. It is not clear whether obesity increases a woman?s risk of stomach cancer.

Choose ?Next? (below, right) to continue reading this guide to learn about what symptoms this type of cancer can cause. Or, use the colored boxes located on the right side of your screen to visit any section.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/18923
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/19223
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/18503
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/24864
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