

Laryngeal Cancer: Risk Factors



What is a risk factor?

A risk factor is anything that may increase your chance of having a disease. Risk factors for a certain type of cancer might include smoking, diet, family history, or many other things. The exact cause of someone's cancer may not be known. But risk factors can make it more likely for a person to have cancer.

Things you should know about risk factors for cancer:

- Risk factors can increase a person's risk, but they do not always cause the disease.
- Some people with 1 or more risk factors never develop cancer. Other people with cancer have no known risk factors.
- Some risk factors are very well known. But there's ongoing research about risk factors for many types of cancer.

Some risk factors, such as family history, may not be in your control. But others may be things you can change. Knowing about risk factors can help you make choices that might lower your risk. For instance, if an unhealthy diet is a risk factor, you may choose to eat healthy foods. If excess weight is a risk factor, you can ask your healthcare provider to help you lose weight.

Who is at risk for laryngeal cancer?



Risk factors for laryngeal cancer include:

- **Tobacco use.** Smoking any form of tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, or pipes) or marijuana greatly increases your risk. As does using chewing tobacco or snuff. Long-term exposure to other people's smoke, called secondhand smoke, may increase your risk, too.
- **Alcohol use.** Drinking more than 1 drink a day increases your risk. If you drink and smoke, your risk is many times higher.
- **Gender.** Men are 4 to 5 times more likely to develop laryngeal cancer than women.

- **Age.** More than half of people with laryngeal cancer are age 65 or older when the disease is found.
- **Race.** Laryngeal cancer is more common in African Americans and whites than it is in Latinos and Asians.
- **Certain inherited syndromes.** People with certain inherited genetic conditions, such as Fanconi anemia and dyskeratosis congenita, are at increased risk for laryngeal cancer.
- **Certain exposures at work.** People who have been exposed to things like sulfuric acid mist, nickel, wood dust, paint fumes, or asbestos on the job have an increased risk of developing laryngeal cancer. Those working around these substances should follow safety and work regulations. These include having adequate ventilation in the workplace and using industrial respirators.

What are your risk factors?

Talk with your healthcare provider about your risk factors for laryngeal cancer and what you can do about them.

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