

WHAT CAUSES CANCER?

Cancer is a complex group of diseases with many possible causes. The known causes of cancer are

OLD AGE

- Most important risk factor for cancer is growing older
- Most cancers occur in people over the age of 65
- But people of all ages, including children, can get cancer, too

GENETICS FACTORS & HEREDITY

- Some types of cancer run in certain families. But most cancers are not clearly linked to the genes we inherit from our parents
- In some cases, cancer is caused by, abnormal gene that can lead to cancer, not the cancer itself
- Only about 5-10% of all cancers are inherited



TOBACCO

- Cigarette smoking accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths
- Tobacco smoke contains a deadly mix of more than 7,000 chemicals of them hundreds are toxic and about 70 can cause cancer
- Smokeless tobacco (Snuff & Chewing tobacco) contain at least 28 chemicals which can cause cancer

DIET AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Being overweight or obese is clearly linked with an increased risk of breast cancer, colorectal cancer and pancreatic cancer
- Obesity also likely raises the risk of other cancers multiple myeloma, non-hodgkin's lymphoma and cervical cancer



ALCOHOL USE AND CANCER

- Alcohol is a known cause of cancers of the mouth, throat (Pharynx), voice box (Larynx), esophagus, liver, colon and rectum, breast and pancreas
- For each of these cancers, the risk increases with the amount of alcohol consumed

SUN AND UV EXPOSURE

- Sun and Ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure increases the risk of skin cancers
 - Unprotected and/or excessive exposure to UV radiation
 - Pale complexion (difficulty tanning, easily sunburned, natural red or blond hair color)
 - Occupational exposures to coal tar, pitch, creosote, arsenic compounds or radium
 - Severe sunburns in the past

IONIZING RADIATION

- Ionizing radiation can cause cell damage that leads to cancer
- This kind of radiation comes from rays that enter the Earth's atmosphere from outer space
 - Radioactive fallout
 - Radon gas
 - X-rays

CERTAIN CHEMICALS AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

- Painters, construction workers and those in the chemical industry have an increased risk of cancer
- Exposure to asbestos, benzene, benzidine, cadmium, nickel, or vinyl chloride in the workplace can cause cancer.

INFECTIONS

Being infected with certain viruses or bacteria may increase the risk of developing cancer:

- **Human papillomaviruses (HPVs):** HPV infection is the main cause of cervical cancer.
- **Hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses:** Liver cancer can develop after many years of infection with hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- **Epstein-Barr virus (EBV):** Infection with EBV has been linked to an increased risk of lymphoma.
- **Human herpes virus 8 (HHV8):** This virus is a risk factor for Kaposi's sarcoma
- **Helicobacter pylori:** This bacterium can cause stomach ulcers. It also can cause stomach cancer and lymphoma in the stomach lining