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# Uterine Sarcoma Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention

## Risk Factors

A risk factor is anything that affects your chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Learn more about the risk factors for uterine sarcoma.

- [Risk Factors for Uterine Sarcoma](#)
- [What Causes Uterine Sarcoma?](#)

## Prevention

Most cases of uterine sarcoma cannot be prevented. Although pelvic radiation increases the risk of developing a uterine sarcoma, the benefit of pelvic radiation in treating other cancers far outweighs the risk of developing a rare cancer such as uterine sarcoma many years later.

- [Can Uterine Sarcoma Be Prevented?](#)
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# Risk Factors for Uterine Sarcoma

A risk factor is anything that affects your chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Different cancers have different risk factors. For example, exposing skin to strong sunlight is a risk factor for skin cancer. Smoking is a risk factor for many cancers.

There are different kinds of risk factors. Some, such as your age or race, can't be changed. Others may be related to personal choices such as smoking, drinking, or diet. Some factors influence risk more than others. But risk factors don't tell us everything. Having a risk factor, or even several, does not mean that a person will get the disease. Also, not having any risk factors doesn't mean that you won't get the disease.

These factors are known to change a woman's risk of developing a uterine sarcoma.

## Pelvic radiation therapy

High-energy (ionizing) [radiation](#)<sup>1</sup> used to treat some cancers can damage cells' DNA, sometimes increasing the risk of [developing a second type of cancer](#)<sup>2</sup>. If you've had pelvic radiation, your risk for developing uterine sarcoma is increased. These cancers usually are diagnosed 5 to 25 years after you've been exposed to the radiation.

## Race

Uterine sarcomas are about twice as common in African-American women as they are in white or Asian women. The reason for this is unknown.

## RB gene changes

Women who have had a type of eye cancer called [retinoblastoma](#)<sup>3</sup> that was caused by being born with an abnormal copy of the *RB* gene have an increased risk of uterine leiomyosarcomas.

Remember, that these factors increase the risk for developing some uterine sarcomas, but they may not always cause the disease.

## Hyperlinks

1. [www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/treatment-types/radiation.html](http://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/treatment-types/radiation.html)
2. [www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/second-cancers-in-adults.html](http://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/second-cancers-in-adults.html)
3. [www.cancer.org/cancer/retinoblastoma.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/retinoblastoma.html)

## References

See all references for Uterine Sarcoma ([www.cancer.org/cancer/uterine-sarcoma/references.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/uterine-sarcoma/references.html))

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## What Causes Uterine Sarcoma?

Doctors don't know exactly what causes most uterine sarcomas, but certain [risk factors](#) have been identified. Research is helping to learn more about this rare disease.

For instance, scientists have learned about changes in the DNA of certain [genes](#)<sup>1</sup> when normal uterine cells develop into sarcomas. You can learn more about research being done in [What's New in Uterine Sarcoma Research and Treatment?](#)<sup>2</sup>

### Hyperlinks

1. [www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/genetics/genes-and-cancer.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/genetics/genes-and-cancer.html)
2. [www.cancer.org/cancer/uterine-sarcoma/about/new-research.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/uterine-sarcoma/about/new-research.html)

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