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## Can Childhood Cancers Be Prevented?

Unlike many cancers of adults, **lifestyle-related risk factors (such as smoking) don't play much of a role in a child's risk of getting cancer.** A few environmental factors, such as [radiation exposure](#)<sup>1</sup>, have been linked with an increased risk of some childhood cancers. But in some cases exposure to radiation might be unavoidable, such as if the child needs radiation therapy to treat another cancer.

**If your child does develop cancer, it's important to know that it's extremely unlikely there is anything you or your child could have done to prevent it.**

Very rarely, a child might inherit [gene changes](#)<sup>2</sup> that make them very likely to get a certain kind of cancer. In such cases, doctors may sometimes recommend preventive surgery to remove an organ before cancer has a chance to develop there. But again, this is very rare.

### Hyperlinks

1. [www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/radiation-exposure/x-rays-gamma-rays.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/radiation-exposure/x-rays-gamma-rays.html)
2. [www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/genetics/genes-and-cancer.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/genetics/genes-and-cancer.html)

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