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Hodgkin Lymphoma Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention

Learn about the risk factors for Hodgkin lymphoma and what you might be able to do to help lower your risk.

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 Hodgkin lymphoma.

- [Hodgkin Lymphoma Risk Factors](#)
- [What Causes Hodgkin Lymphoma?](#)

Prevention

There's no way to completely prevent cancer. But there are things you can do that might help lower your risk. Learn more here.

- [Can Hodgkin Lymphoma Be Prevented?](#)

Hodgkin Lymphoma Risk Factors

- [Epstein-Barr virus infection/mononucleosis](#)
- [Age](#)



It's not clear why family history might increase risk. It might be because family members have similar childhood exposures to certain infections (such as Epstein-Barr virus), because they share inherited gene changes that make them more likely to get HL, or some combination of these factors.

Weakened immune system

The risk of HL is increased in people infected with [HIV²](#), the virus that causes AIDS.

People who take medicines to suppress the immune system after an organ transplant and people with auto-immune diseases are also at higher than normal risk for HL.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/hodgkin-lymphoma/about/what-is-hodgkin-disease.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/infections/hiv-infection-aids.html

References

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Bartlett NL, Foyil KV. Chapter 105: Hodgkin lymphoma. In: Niederhuber JE, Armitage JO, Dorshow JH, Kastan MB, Tepper JE, eds. *Abeloff's Clinical Oncology*. 5th ed. Philadelphia, Pa. Elsevier: 2014.

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Shanbhag S, Ambinder RF. Hodgkin lymphoma: A review and update. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. 2017;35(16):1811-1821.



What Causes Hodgkin Lymphoma?

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/understanding-cancer/genes-and-cancer.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/understanding-cancer/genes-and-cancer/oncogenes-tumor-suppressor-genes.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/understanding-cancer/genes-and-cancer/oncogenes-tumor-suppressor-genes.html
4. www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/lymph-nodes-and-cancer.html

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Younes A, Carbone A, Johnson P, Dabaja B, Ansell S, Kuruvilla J. Chapter 102: Hodgkin's lymphoma. In: DeVita VT, Lawrence TS, Rosenberg SA, eds. *DeVita, Hellman, and Rosenberg's Cancer: Principles and Practice of Oncology*. 10th ed. Philadelphia, Pa: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2015.

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Can Hodgkin Lymphoma Be Prevented?

Few of the known [risk factors](#) for Hodgkin lymphoma (HL) can be changed, so it's not possible to prevent most cases of the disease at this time.

Infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is known to increase risk, so one way to limit your risk is to avoid known risk factors for HIV, such as intravenous (IV) drug use or unprotected sex with many partners. You can read more about this in [HIV Infection, AIDS, and Cancer](#)¹.

Another risk factor for HL is infection with the Epstein-Barr virus (the cause of infectious

mononucleosis, or mono), but there's no known way to prevent this infection.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/infections/hiv-infection-aids.html

References

Bartlett NL, Foyil KV. Chapter 105: Hodgkin lymphoma. In: Niederhuber JE, Armitage JO, Dorshow JH, Kastan MB, Tepper JE, eds. *Abeloff's Clinical Oncology*. 5th ed. Philadelphia, Pa. Elsevier: 2014.

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