



Risk factors for cancer

Extracted from *Cancer in Australia 2012*

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Cancer is a major cause of illness in Australia and has a significant impact on individuals, families and the health-care system. Despite a decline in cancer mortality and an increase in survival over time,

1 in 2 Australians will develop cancer and 1 in 5 will die from it before the age of 85.

In 2012, it is estimated that **120,710 new cases** of cancer will be diagnosed in Australia (excluding basal and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin). More than half (56%) of these are expected to be diagnosed in males, and nearly three-quarters (70%) will occur among those aged 60 and over.

A risk factor is any factor associated with an increased likelihood of a person developing a health disorder or health condition, such as cancer. Understanding what causes cancer is essential to successfully prevent, detect and treat the disease.

Risk factors



Note: *Iatrogenic factors are inadvertent adverse effects or complications resulting from medical treatment or advice.

While some risk factors cannot be changed, others—mainly those related to behaviours and lifestyle—are modifiable.

It should be noted that having a risk factor does not mean that a person will develop cancer. Many people have at least one cancer risk factor but will never get cancer, while others with this disease may have had no known risk factors.