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# Uterine Sarcoma Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention

Learn about the risk factors for uterine sarcoma and if there are things you might be able to do to help lower your risk.

## Risk Factors

A risk factor is anything that increases 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

- [Pelvic radiation therapy](#)
- [Congenital \(heritable\) retinoblastoma](#)
- [Family history of kidney cancer](#)
- [Tamoxifen](#)

A risk factor is anything that increases your chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Different cancers have different risk factors. Some risk factors, like smoking, can be changed; others, like a person's age or family history, can't.

Having a risk factor, or even several, does not mean that you will get the disease. And many people who get the disease may have few or no known risk factors.

Although this cancer is very rare, a few risk factors are known to increase a woman's risk of developing a uterine sarcoma.

## **Pelvic radiation therapy**

[Radiation](#)<sup>1</sup> to the pelvis can increase your risk for developing uterine sarcoma. This has been seen sometimes after someone has had radiation to treat cervical cancer or rectal cancer. These cancers usually are diagnosed 5 to 25 years after the radiation treatment.

## **Congenital (heritable) retinoblastoma**

Women who have had a type of eye cancer called congenital (heritable) [retinoblastoma](#)<sup>2</sup> as a child have an increased risk of soft tissue sarcomas, including uterine sarcomas.

## **Family history of kidney cancer**

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## **What Causes Uterine Sarcoma?**

Scientists continue to learn about changes in the DNA of certain [genes](#)<sup>1</sup> that help when normal uterine cells develop into sarcomas.

For example,

- Changes in the *RB1*, *TP53*, and *PTEN* genes have been found in uterine leiomyosarcomas.
- Lowgrade endometrial stromal sarcoma (ESS) is often linked with an abnormal gene called *JAZF 1SUZ12*.
- Highgrade endometrial stromal sarcoma (ESS) has been linked with the abnormal gene *YWHAENUTM*.

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

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# Can Uterine Sarcoma Be Prevented?

- [Pelvic radiation](#)
- [Tamoxifen](#)

Most cases of uterine sarcoma cannot be prevented.

## Pelvic radiation

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.

## Tamoxifen

The risk of developing uterine sarcomas while taking tamoxifen is small and there are not specific things you can do to prevent a uterine sarcoma if you're taking it. But doctors will most likely watch you closely with regular pelvic exams and ask you to get medical care as soon as possible if you start to bleed abnormally from the uterus.

## References

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