

Characteristics That Determine Eligibility for Cancer Screening

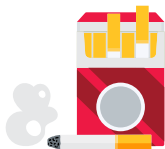
Many factors can contribute to an individual's risk of developing cancer, and each person has his or her unique cancer risks. Thus, the decision of whether someone should be screened for cancer, at what age, and for which cancer type(s) is different for each person. It is important that people consult with their health care providers to develop a personalized cancer screening plan that considers their risk of developing a cancer and their tolerance for the potential harms of a screening test. Broadly speaking, individuals fall into two categories for cancer screening:

INDIVIDUALS AT AVERAGE RISK OF DEVELOPING CANCER

Individuals are considered at an average risk of developing cancer if they do not have a family or personal history of cancer and are without any known risk factors that can cause cancer. Health care providers consider two key characteristics—age and gender—when recommending a cancer screening test to a person who is at an average risk.

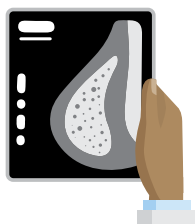
INDIVIDUALS AT HIGH RISK OF DEVELOPING CANCER

Individuals are considered at a higher risk for developing certain type(s) of cancer if they have an increased exposure to one or more cancer risk factors, unique tissue makeup, a family history of cancer, and/or belong to certain racial and ethnic minorities:



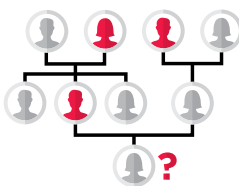
Individuals with increased exposure to one or more cancer risk factors:

For example, individuals who smoke tobacco are at a higher risk for developing cancer. According to CDC, people who smoke cigarettes are 15 to 30 times more likely to develop lung cancer or die from it than people who do not smoke.



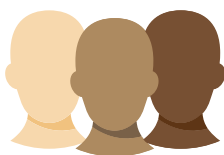
Individuals with a unique cellular or tissue makeup:

For example, women who have extremely dense breasts have an increased risk of developing breast cancer compared to women with less dense breasts. This is because dense breast tissue, like breast cancer, appears white on mammograms, thus reducing their effectiveness in distinguishing tumor from normal tissue. As another example, women found to have certain patterns of “overactive” breast tissue in an otherwise benign breast biopsy (e.g., atypical cells or lobular carcinoma in situ) are also at increased risk for developing breast cancer.



Individuals with inherited cancer susceptibility syndromes:

Also called hereditary cancer syndromes, inherited cancer susceptibility syndromes are caused by inherited genetic mutations that can predispose an individual to develop certain types of cancer. As one example, women who have certain mutations in the *BRCA1/2* genes and a family history of breast cancer are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer. If an individual thinks that he or she is at a high risk for inheriting a cancer-predisposing genetic mutation, he or she should consult a health care provider and consider genetic testing and genetic counseling.



Individuals from certain racial and ethnic minorities:

Individuals belonging to certain racial and ethnic minorities are at a higher risk of developing certain types of cancer and at an earlier age compared to the White population. For example, accruing evidence shows that a breast cancer diagnosis at a younger age is more common in Black women compared to White women. Furthermore, Black women are more likely to be diagnosed with biologically aggressive forms of the disease at all ages.