Environmental factors, behaviors influence bladder cancer risk

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**Question:** Who is at risk of bladder cancer?

**Answer:** More than 74,000 new cases of bladder cancer were diagnosed in 2014, the American Cancer Society estimates. Men are likelier to develop bladder cancer than women, and whites have a greater risk than people of other races.

Smoking is the most important risk factor for bladder cancer. Smokers are about three times as likely to get it as nonsmokers; smoking causes about 50 percent of the bladder cancers in both men and women. When smokers inhale, some cancer-causing chemicals in tobacco smoke are absorbed from the lungs and into the blood. Then the blood is filtered by the kidneys and concentrated in the urine. These chemicals in urine can damage the cells that line the inside of the bladder - increasing the chance of cancer.

Occupational exposure is believed to be related to another 20 percent of bladder cancers in the U.S. Exposure to certain industrial chemicals, such as aniline dyes used to color fabrics, chlorinated hydrocarbons, and combustion gases and soot from coal have been linked to bladder cancer. Workers with increased risk include painters, machinists, printers, hairdressers, and truck drivers. Smokers who work with cancer-causing chemicals are at especially high risk.

Other risk factors:

- Consumption of certain analgesics containing phenacetin.
- Chronic cystitis (inflammation of the bladder) in the presence of long-term catheters or calculi (small stones).
- Pelvic irradiation.
- Cyclophosphamide, a drug used to treat cancers and autoimmune disorders.
- Diabetics using Actos for more than 12 months.
- Coffee and tea, while implicated, have not been shown to raise risk of bladder cancer. And artificial sweeteners have not been shown to be bladder carcinogens in studies of rodents.
- See your doctor if you have any of the following bladder cancer symptoms:
  - Blood in the urine.
  - Frequent urination.
  - Pain during urination.
  - Lower back pain.