

# Kidney Cancer

Kidney cancer originates in the kidneys, which filter blood and remove waste. The most common type of kidney cancer in adults is renal cell carcinoma, which begins in the lining of the filtering tubes of the kidney.

## Statistics

- In 2024 an estimated **81,610 new cases** of kidney and renal pelvis cancers are expected to be diagnosed in the U.S.
- An estimated **14,390 Americans** are expected to die from the disease in 2024.
- In Texas in 2024, an estimated **7,650 new kidney and renal pelvis cancers** are expected to be diagnosed, and **1,330 Texans** are expected to die from the disease.
- The average age of people when diagnosed with kidney cancer is **64**. Kidney cancer is **rare under age 45**.
- Of the many types of kidney cancer, about **90% of cases** diagnosed are renal cell carcinoma.
- Kidney cancer is **among the 10 most common cancers**. While the **incidence rate has continued rising since the 1990s**, due in part to improved imaging tests that can better detect early-stage cancers that would have previously been unidentified until a later stage, total cases have leveled out in recent years. The death rate has also remained stagnant for many years.

## Risk Factors

The exact causes of kidney cancer are unknown; however, some risk factors are linked to the disease.

- **Smoking:** Tobacco use has a strong link to kidney cancer, and smoking doubles the risk for developing the disease. The risk decreases over time after quitting smoking.
- **Obesity:** Kidney cancer risk increases for people who are overweight.
- **Race:** African Americans have a slightly higher risk of kidney cancer than White people.
- **Certain medicines:** Use of diuretics and common pain relievers such as acetaminophen has been linked to renal cell carcinoma. Use of phenacetin, a once-popular non-prescription pain reliever banned since 1983, has also been linked to certain types of kidney cancers.
- **High-blood pressure:** People with high blood pressure are at a higher risk of developing the disease. It is not known whether the condition or the medicine, including diuretics, used to treat it is to blame for the increase in risk.
- **Gender:** Men are about twice as likely to develop the disease as women.
- **Family history:** People with a strong family history of renal cell carcinoma are at a higher risk to develop kidney cancer. Brothers and sisters of those diagnosed are at the highest risk.
- **Kidney disease:** Those with advanced kidney disease and those on dialysis have an increased risk.
- **Hereditary disease:** People with rare inherited conditions including Birt-Hogg-Dube syndrome, hereditary leiomyoma-renal cell carcinoma, hereditary papillary renal cell carcinoma, familial renal cancer, tuberous sclerosis syndrome, Cowden syndrome, and von Hippel-Lindau disease have an increased risk.
- **Exposure to chemicals:** Some research links exposure to cadmium and organic solvents such as trichloroethylene to an increased risk of developing kidney cancer.

## Symptoms

Kidney cancer varies with each patient; some have no symptoms in the early stages. People with any of the following symptoms should consult their physician:

- Blood in the urine
- Low blood counts (anemia)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Unexplained low back or side (flank) pain
- Loss of appetite
- Fatigue
- Unexplained fever
- Enlarged veins around a testicle
- Abdominal side or lower back mass
- Bowel blockage
- Swollen abdomen, kidney area, ankles, or legs

## Tips for Prevention

Kidney cancer cannot be completely prevented. However, certain lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling high blood pressure, and reducing or avoiding exposure to certain environmental toxins, are believed to decrease the risk of developing the disease.

## Treatment Options

Kidney cancer, depending on the stage, may be treated by a team of specialists including medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, and urologists. Treatment options vary widely depending on the type and stage of the cancer and the patient's overall health. Treatment options include ablation and other local therapies, removing part or all of the kidney, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted therapy, surveillance, palliative medicine and other therapies. Many patients receive a combination of treatments.

## About Texas Oncology

With more than 530 physicians and 280 locations, Texas Oncology is an independent private practice, a member of The US Oncology Network, that sees more than 71,000 new cancer patients each year. Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary care, and includes Texas Center for Proton Therapy, Texas Breast Specialists, Texas Colon & Rectal Specialists, Texas Oncology Surgical Specialists, Texas Urology Specialists and Texas Infusion and Imaging Center. Texas Oncology's robust community-based clinical trials and research program has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).

*Sources: American Cancer Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Cancer Institute, and World Cancer Research Fund International*



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