

Cystic Fibrosis and Cancer Risk



People living with CF are at an increased risk of developing certain cancers because of how CFTR dysfunction affects the body. Stay informed, listen to your body, and talk to your care team about any concerns or questions that you may have.



Pancreatic Cancer

People with CF older than 50 are about **3 times more likely to develop pancreatic cancer**. This is because CF causes pancreatic secretions to be thicker, which can accumulate in the pancreas and lead to inflammation, fibrosis, and cellular damage. Chronic inflammation and pancreatic insufficiency can also contribute to the development of pancreatic cancer. Genetic factors associated with both CF and pancreatic cancer development may affect immune response, cellular metabolism, and other pathways that can contribute to pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic cancer is difficult to diagnose early because its noticeable symptoms do not begin until later stages. Symptoms can include jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes), light-colored stools, dark urine, pain in the upper or middle abdomen and back, weight loss for no known reason, loss of appetite, and feeling very tired.

Colorectal Cancer



People living with CF are **5 to 10 times more likely to develop colorectal cancer**. You can learn more here.



Organ Transplant and Cancer

People who receive solid organ transplants, like lung, liver, or kidney, are more likely to develop certain cancers because of how organ transplants affect the body. People who have had organ transplants have suppressed immune systems because of the medications they take, so they are more likely to develop certain viruses like HIV, HPV, Epstein-Barr virus, and hepatitis B and C, which can cause cancer like **non-Hodgkin lymphoma and Hodgkin lymphoma, Kaposi sarcoma, and genital cancers**.

HPV, or human papillomavirus, leads to an increased risk of genital cancers, including **cervical cancer**. There is a vaccine available to prevent HPV and a test available called a PAP test that collects cells from the cervix to screen for cervical cancer. With any vaccine or test, you should talk to your doctor and care team about the right options for you.

People who have had organ transplants are also about **100 times more likely to develop skin cancer**. People who have had heart or lung transplants may be more at risk than those who have had kidney or liver transplants. An annual full-body scan by a dermatologist can check for suspicious growths or moles that may be signs of skin cancer.

People who have had organ transplants are also at a higher risk of developing **lung, kidney, skin, and thyroid cancers**.

DISCLAIMER: The Boomer Esiason Foundation provides information and guidance to adults living with cystic fibrosis for educational purposes only. The advice offered, including recommendations such as cancer screening, is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Please consult your healthcare provider before implementing any new regimen as individual medical conditions and needs vary, and only a healthcare provider can provide tailored advice based on a comprehensive understanding of the individual's health status and medical history.