Nonsmoking Cancer Risks

Up to 20 percent of those who die of lung cancer have never puffed on cigarettes.

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Although lung cancer is most associated with smoking, the American Cancer Society notes that other factors can increase an individual's risk for lung cancer.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers. This colorless, odorless radioactive gas is given off by soil or rock and may be present in homes and other buildings.

In addition, breathing secondhand smoke increases a nonsmoker's risk of developing lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent. (This harmful type of exposure is responsible for 7,300 lung cancer deaths among nonsmoking adults each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.)

Finally, carcinogens, or cancer-causing agents, such as asbestos and diesel exhaust, in certain workplaces may also raise one's risk for lung cancer.

So what should you do? Avoid secondhand smoke, and test your home for radon to lower the chance you'll develop cancer of the lungs.

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