

Quit smoking, your bladder will thank you

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(HealthDay)—If you smoke, you significantly increase your odds of developing bladder cancer, experts warn.

"Everyone knows smoking causes lung cancer, but they don't always know about bladder cancer," said Dr. Srinivas Vourganti, a urologist at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago who specializes in treating bladder and other [urinary tract cancers](#).

Smoking causes more than half of all cases of bladder cancer, and smokers are three times more likely to get bladder cancer than nonsmokers.

"The same harmful chemicals you inhale when you smoke accumulate in your urine, and as the bladder holds urine, it is exposed to these toxins at a higher rate than other parts of the body," Vourganti said in a university news release.

Exposure to secondhand smoke and toxic solvents and dyes are other significant risk factors for bladder cancer, and so are recurring urinary tract infections and other sources of chronic bladder

irritation, he noted.

Bladder cancer is the sixth most common form of cancer in the United States. It's over three times more common in men than in women, and the risk increases with age. Nine in 10 patients are older than 55.

Like other cancers, bladder cancer is most treatable when it's found in the early stages, according to Vourganti and Dr. Edward Cherullo, a urologist at Rush.

"Because there is no routine screening for bladder cancer, as there is for breast or [colon cancer](#), the number one tool we have for diagnosing bladder [cancer](#) early is when a primary care doctor orders a urine test that finds blood in the urine," Cherullo said.

Tell your doctor if you have blood in your urine or have frequent and/or painful urination. While these symptoms are often caused by non-life-threatening conditions—such as [urinary tract infection](#), [overactive bladder](#) or an enlarged prostate—it's important to get checked to rule out [bladder cancer](#).

More information: For more on bladder cancer, go to the [American Cancer Society](#).

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