The stress and cancer link: how a stress gene may help cancer spread

In an unexpected finding, scientists have linked the activation of a stress gene in immune-system cells to the spread of breast cancer to other parts of the body.

Researchers say the study suggests this gene, called ATF3, may be the crucial link between stress and cancer, including the major cause of cancer death — its spread, or metastasis. Previous public health studies have shown that stress is a risk factor for cancer.

This research suggests, however, that cancer cells somehow coax immune-system cells that have been recruited to the site of a tumor to express ATF3. Though it's still unclear how, ATF3 promotes the immune cells to act erratically and give cancer an escape route from a tumor to other areas of the body.

Read the full, original story here: The Stress and Cancer Link: 'Master-Switch' Stress Gene Enables Cancer's Spread