

While overall rate of cancer is going down, it's on the rise in young Americans. Why?

Most cancers in the United States are found in people [age 65 and older](#), but a new study shows a concerning trend: Cancer among younger Americans, particularly women, is on the rise, with gastrointestinal, endocrine and breast cancers climbing at the fastest rates.

A study [published](#) [16 August] in JAMA Network Open showed that while cancers among older adults have declined, cancers among people younger than 50 have increased slightly overall, with the largest increases among those age 30 to 39.

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There is not a clear explanation why cancer is rising among younger people, but experts say there are several possible reasons behind the trend, including rising [obesity](#) rates and lifestyle factors such as [drinking alcohol](#), [smoking](#), sleeping poorly and being sedentary. [Environmental factors](#), including exposure to pollutants and carcinogenic chemicals, also probably play a role.

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Although the total numbers were small, the biggest increases in cancer among younger people by race were seen in Asian or Pacific Islander (32 percent) and Hispanic patients (28 percent). Cases among younger Black patients slightly declined, falling by about 5 percent. It's not clear if the decline is meaningful or if cases are underdiagnosed.

Overall, younger people diagnosed with cancer still represent a relatively small portion of overall cancer cases, but the increases are nonetheless concerning.

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