

National Cancer Institute

at the National Institutes of Health

Questions About Cancer?
1-800-4-CANCER

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Understanding Cancer Series: Cancer

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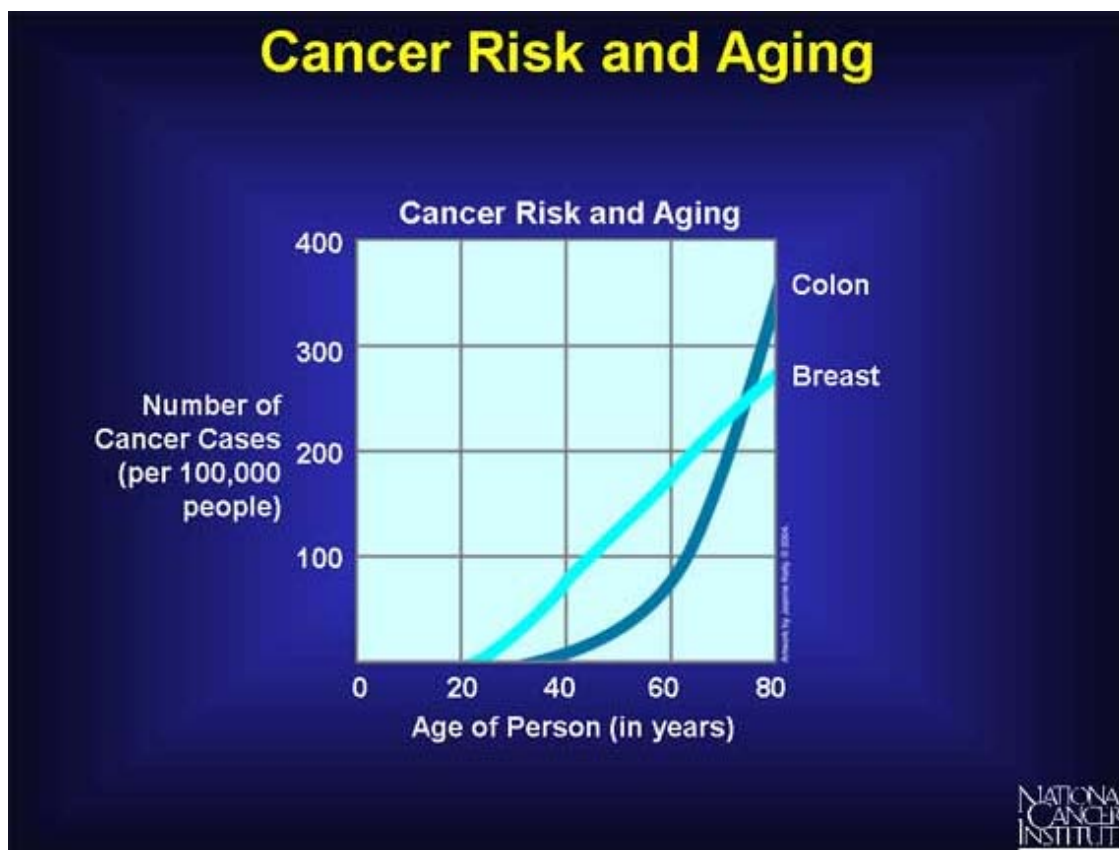
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Because a number of mutations usually must occur for cancer to arise, the chances of developing cancer increase as a person gets older because more time has been available for mutations to accumulate. For example, a 75-year-old person is a hundred times more likely to develop colon cancer than a 25-year-old. Because people are living longer today than they did 50 or 100 years ago, they have a longer exposure time to factors that may promote gene changes linked to cancer.



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