Massive chromosome damage may occur in a single event, triggering cancer

Printed from https://www.cancerquest.org/newsroom/2011/01/massive-chromosome-damage-may-occur-single-event-triggering-cancer on 11/18/2026



The generally accepted view is that cancer forms in a step-wise progression. Changes (mutations) accumulate gradually over time, making the cells progressively more abnormal. Eventually, cancer cells arise. The process can take years to occur.

Researchers working with new DNA analysis tools have found that this model of cancer formation may not be the only one. The results of studies with several types of tumors showed that the cells may suffer massive damage in a single 'catastrophic' event. The damage may be sufficient that this single event can cause cancer to arise.The authors suggest that 2-3% of all cancers may form in this manner.

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