

# About Cystic Fibrosis

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is an inherited chronic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system of about 30,000 children and adults in the United States (70,000 worldwide).

Source: Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
([www.cff.org/AboutCF/](http://www.cff.org/AboutCF/))

Millions of Americans carry a mutated CF gene, but do not have any symptoms. That's because a person with CF must inherit two mutated CF genes—one from each parent—for the disease to appear. An estimated 1 in 29 Caucasian Americans carries the CF gene. CF is the most common, life-threatening, inherited disorder affecting Caucasians in the United States. It's more common among those of Northern or Central European descent.

Source: PubMed Health  
([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/))

Most children with CF are diagnosed by age 2. A small number, however, are not diagnosed until age 18 or older. These patients usually have a milder form of the disease.

Source: PubMed Health  
([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/))

Today, the average life span for people with CF who live to adulthood is approximately 37 years, a dramatic increase over the last three decades.

Source: PubMed Health  
([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/))

There is no way to prevent CF. Screening those with a family history of the disease may detect a mutated CF gene in 60–90% of carriers, depending on the test used.

Source: PubMed Health  
([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001167/))

About 1,000 new CF cases are diagnosed each year.

Source: Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
([www.cff.org/AboutCF/](http://www.cff.org/AboutCF/))

More than 10 million Americans carry an abnormal CF gene. Someone with a family history of CF is more likely to carry an abnormal CF gene than someone from an unaffected family. The risk of carrying the abnormal gene by ethnicity is as follows:

- Caucasians: 1 in 29
- Hispanics: 1 in 46
- African-Americans: 1 in 65
- Asian-Americans: 1 in 90

The chance that two Caucasian parents carry an abnormal CF gene is about 1 in 800; the risk is less in other groups.

Source: March of Dimes  
([www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com))

