



Lung Cancer Fact Sheet

Lung cancer is the second most common cancer and the leading cause of cancer death in the US. There are different kinds of lung cancer. The two most common types are non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and small cell lung cancer (SCLC).

Risk Factors

Smoking is, by far, the leading cause of lung cancer. But not all people with lung cancer smoke. Some may have smoked in the past, and some people with lung cancer have never smoked at all.

Some risk factors for lung cancer can be changed. These include smoking tobacco, breathing in secondhand smoke from tobacco users, or being exposed to certain cancer-causing chemicals like radon and asbestos.

Other risk factors cannot be changed. These include a person's age and their personal or family history, having been treated with radiation therapy to the chest in the past, or being exposed to outdoor air pollution.

Prevention

Not all lung cancers can be prevented. And some people who get lung cancer do not have any known risk factors. But there are ways a person can help lower their risk:

- Avoid all tobacco products.
- Stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Keep cars and homes smoke-free.
- Avoid or limit exposure to cancer-causing chemicals that may be in the home or workplace.
- Follow a healthy eating pattern that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Screening

The American Cancer Society recommends screening for certain people at a higher risk for lung cancer. If a person currently smokes or has quit in the last 15 years, is **50 to 80 years old** and is in fairly good health, they might benefit from screening for lung cancer with a yearly low-dose CT scan (LDCT). Talk to a health care provider to learn more about the possible benefits, limits, and risks of lung cancer screening.

Signs and Symptoms

Most lung cancers do not cause symptoms until they have spread outside the lungs. Some common signs and symptoms of lung cancer include:

- A cough that does not go away or gets worse
- Coughing up blood or rust-colored spit or phlegm
- Chest pain that is often worse with deep breathing, coughing, or laughing
- Hoarseness
- Loss of appetite
- Losing weight without trying
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or weak
- Infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia that don't go away or keep coming back

Treatment

Treatment for lung cancer depends on several factors. These include the type and extent of the cancer, the person's age, other health problems, and personal choices. Also, special testing might be done on the tumor to decide the best treatment. People with lung cancer should discuss all options with their doctors to make the best treatment decisions.

Living With Lung Cancer

From the time a person is told they have lung cancer, their quality of life is affected. Physical, social, psychological, spiritual, and financial issues can come up at any time during and after treatment.

Some types of lung cancer can be serious. People with advanced lung cancer may be helped by palliative care at any time after diagnosis. Palliative care focuses on helping people improve their quality of life and cope with issues they may have when living with a serious illness.

Good communication between a person with cancer and their health care team is important. This should include:

- Asking and answering questions
- Working together to set care goals
- Making shared decisions
- Managing side effects and other issues
- Making sure to set up follow-up tests and care



To learn more, visit www.cancer.org/cancer/lung-cancer.html.