

Lung Cancer Screening

Making a choice

What do I need to know about lung cancer?

Lung cancer starts when abnormal cells grow out of control in the lung. These cells can form a tumor or spread to other parts of the body.

About 85 percent of people who have lung cancer smoked. The best way to lower your chances of dying from lung cancer is to quit smoking.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Each year about 220,000 people are diagnosed with lung cancer and 150,000 people die from it.

How can I help prevent lung cancer?

Lung cancer that is caused by smoking can be prevented. Quitting smoking and staying smokefree is important.

Ask your care team for information about how to quit smoking. With determination, support and a plan, you can stop smoking forever.

What is lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer screening is a test that looks for lung cancer before you have symptoms. Screening does not prevent cancer, but you are less likely to die from lung cancer if it is found early.

The screening is done using an X-ray machine to scan the chest. The name of the screening is low-dose computed tomography, also called *low-dose CT scan* or *LDCT*. A low dose of radiation is used to make a series of detailed pictures of the lungs.

To whom is lung cancer screening offered?

New studies show that it may help people who are at high risk for lung cancer.

Those who benefit from yearly lung cancer screening are people who:

- ♦ Are 55 to 77 years old
- ♦ Are currently smokers or have quit within the past 15 years
- ♦ Have no symptoms of lung cancer
- ♦ Have a smoking history of 30 pack years
 - » If you smoked at least 1 pack of cigarettes a day for 30 years, you have smoked for 30 packs years.
 - » If you smoked 2 packs a day for 15 years, you have smoked for 30 pack years.

Who does not benefit from lung cancer screening?

Screening does not benefit those who:

- ♦ Have a condition that greatly limits how long they may live.
- ♦ Are not willing to have surgery for lung cancer.

What are the benefits of lung cancer screening?

For some people who are at high risk, having this test every year lowers the risk of dying from lung cancer. If 1,000 people are screened with LDCT once a year for 3 years, 3 fewer people will die from lung cancer.

What are the risks?

- ♦ **Radiation exposure**—LDCT exposes you to radiation. Everyone receives a small amount of radiation from the natural environment. The radiation from LDCT is about 12 months of naturally occurring radiation for an average-size person.
- ♦ **False alarms**—Sometimes LDCT may show a finding that is not cancer. These results are called *false positives* and may lead to having more tests and procedures.
- ♦ **Unnecessary treatment**—Also called *overdiagnosis*. LDCT can show suspicious nodules. These nodules may be treated even though they may never cause problems.
- ♦ **Finding other problems**—During your screening, your care team may find other health problems, such as lung damage or an infection, that you would not have known about without the test.

What happens after screening?

If the screening shows nodules or cancer, you and your care team will discuss your next steps — taking into consideration your overall health and choices about diagnosis and treatment. If the screening does not show nodules or cancer, it is important to have yearly lung cancer screening to find cancer before you have symptoms. Yearly screening results can include:

- ♦ Not finding nodules or cancer
- ♦ Find a nodule that requires more testing, more procedures or both
- ♦ Finding cancer

Does insurance pay for the screening?

Medicare and most private insurance plans cover yearly lung cancer screening if you meet the screening criteria. Medicare pays for lung cancer screening with no out-of-pocket costs for people up to age 77 if you meet the following criteria:

- ♦ You must have a written order from your healthcare provider.
- ♦ Your visit with your provider must be a “shared decision making visit.” In this visit your provider must use a decision aid such as this one, and discuss benefits and harms of LDCT. Your provider must also talk about follow-up diagnostic testing, over diagnosis, false alarms, and total radiation exposure from LDCT.
- ♦ You must go to a screening facility that participates in the lung cancer screening registry set up for Medicare patients.

Check with your health insurance provider about coverage and benefits for lung cancer screening.

For additional tests and treatments needed as a result of the screening, check with your insurance provider about coverage and benefits for the cost of these additional services.

What is important to you when deciding about lung cancer screening?

Think about what matters most to you when deciding whether to do lung cancer screening. After you have filled in your answers, check to see where your answers fall. If your responses line up at or near the left, you are more likely to feel that lung cancer screening is right for you. If your responses line up at or near the right, you are more likely to feel that screening is not right for you.

	Favors screening			Favors no screening	
How important is:	Very important			Not important	
Finding lung cancer early when it may be more easily treated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How concerned are you about:	Not concerned			Very concerned	
Having a false alarm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having other tests if you have a positive screening test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being exposed to radiation from lung cancer screening?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being treated for lung cancer that never would have harmed you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being harmed by the treatments you receive for lung cancer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Your decision

- Screening is right for me. (Ask your clinician about how to schedule your screening.)
- Screening is not right for me.
- I am unsure about screening at this time. (Talk with your clinician if you need more information.)