

Lung Cancer

Symptoms and Treatments



Advent Health



Be informed. Be empowered.

Routine screenings can help your doctors catch lung cancer in its early stages, and learning about the disease, risk factors and symptoms can help you avoid developing it. Unfortunately, only half the people at high risk for lung cancer get the screenings that could help save their lives. With almost 225,000 people being diagnosed with lung cancer every year, it's the most common cancer in the world. With early detection through screening tests, we can help improve these odds. This guide will give you some of the information and resources you need to help protect yourself.

Here's what you need to know about lung cancer.

Our bodies are made up of trillions of healthy cells that grow and divide to create healthy new cells that replace old or damaged cells. Lung cancer is the growth of cancerous cells in the lung tissue. When our immune systems are unable to replace and remove damaged cells, those cells can create new, malfunctioning cells that continue to divide uncontrollably. This can result in tissue growth called tumors.

Cancerous tumors are dangerous because the cancer cells can spread, or metastasize, to nearby tissues. When these cells break off and travel through our blood or lymph systems, new tumors can form in other parts of the body.

Most lung cancer does not show any symptoms until the cancer is more advanced. Therefore, it is important to monitor your risk factors and work with your doctor to get the right screening tests, if needed. This guide will review some information about common types of lung cancer, as well as their symptoms and treatments.

What are the common types of lung cancer?

While many of the risk factors are the same for each type of lung cancer, treatments are different.

Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC)

NSCLC is the most common type of lung cancer, making up about 85% of cases. It has three subtypes: squamous cell carcinoma, adenocarcinoma and large-cell carcinoma.

Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC)

Only making up about 10 to 15% of lung cancer cases, SCLC usually spreads quickly. It is also called oat cell cancer.

Lung Carcinoid Tumor

The rarest type of lung cancer, making up fewer than 5% of cases, lung carcinoid tumors usually grow slowly and rarely spread. They are also called lung neuroendocrine tumors.

Mesothelioma

Though technically not considered a lung cancer, mesothelioma is a disease that affects the lining around the lungs. Mesothelioma typically affects those who have been exposed to asbestos.

What causes lung cancer?

Lung cancer is a genetic disease, meaning it occurs because of the way your body's lung cells grow, divide and mutate due to genetic changes.

Genetic changes can be passed down from your family members, happen randomly, or happen because of an environmental exposure to harmful chemicals, such as those found in tobacco or radiation, which damage your DNA.

Breathing in tobacco smoke is the leading cause of lung cancer and the highest risk factor for the disease. That said, non-smokers can also get lung cancer for no explained reason, or due to exposure to something harmful in the environment. Some people inherit a DNA mutation from a family member, which increases their risk for developing lung cancer even if they are non-smokers.



What you can do to prevent lung cancer.

There is no known way to prevent lung cancer, but there are ways to reduce your risk factors for the disease. Start by getting your screening exams and tests as soon as your doctor recommends them and work with your doctor to develop a plan to reduce your overall risk. With routine screenings, the hope is that if you do get lung cancer, it can be found and treated early for the best possible results.

Here are some steps you can take to reduce your risk:

- Assess air pollution in your local community and take steps to improve air quality
- Avoid secondhand smoke
- Don't start smoking tobacco, or quit if you do
- If exposed to dust and fumes at work, talk to someone about your health and safety
- Test your home for radon exposure





Understanding your lung cancer risk.

A risk factor is anything that increases the likelihood of developing a disease or injury. It is important to talk about any of these lung cancer risk factors with your doctor. Here are some factors that can increase your chances of developing lung cancer.

Controllable Risks

TOBACCO SMOKE

Smoking is by far the leading risk for lung cancer. Eight out of 10 lung cancer deaths are thought to result from smoking. Limiting exposure to secondhand smoke also reduces the risk for those who are not active smokers.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES

Limit exposure to cancer-causing agents such as radon, asbestos and chromium.

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including getting regular exercise and a diet of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Uncontrollable Risks

AGE

Being age 55 or older.

INHERITED GENES

Having an inherited gene mutation.

FAMILY HISTORY

Having a close relative with a history of lung cancer.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Having a history of lung disease (including emphysema).

RADIATION

Having a history of radiation therapy to the chest.

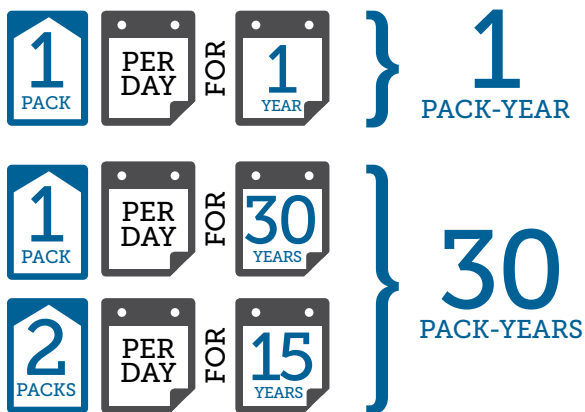
Screening tests for lung cancer.

The American Lung Association believes that at least 8.6 million Americans qualify as high risk for developing lung cancer. The good news is, the disease is beatable if detected early. That's why we offer low-dose computed tomography (CT) scans that provide a safe, easy way to screen for lung cancer. If you meet the high-risk criteria, most insurance companies cover lung cancer screenings.

You are at high risk for lung cancer if you:

- Are over the age of 55
- Currently smoke or quit smoking within the last 15 years
- Are a heavy smoker

You are considered a heavy smoker if you have a pack-year greater than 30. A pack-year is calculated by:



It is recommended that all high-risk individuals get a low-dose CT scan of the lungs. Don't wait for symptoms. Get tested today.

Get the right treatment plan for you.

Your treatment plan for lung cancer will depend on its type, location and stage; however, it usually involves local or systemic treatments, or a combination of them. Sometimes, there are additional treatment options, such as immunotherapy, clinical trials or alternative and complementary therapies.

Local treatments target the tumor without affecting the rest of your body. Examples of local treatments are surgery and radiation therapy. Common surgical procedures to treat lung cancer can involve a lobectomy, laparoscopic procedure (minimally invasive surgery), pneumonectomy, sleeve resection and wedge resection.

Systemic treatments involve medications (given by mouth or delivered directly into the bloodstream), which reach cancer cells wherever they are in the body. These treatments include chemotherapy, pain and symptom management, hormone therapy and targeted therapy.

Beyond the medicine, you'll work with nutritional, spiritual and emotional support experts to ensure you're able to successfully make lifestyle changes that can help contribute to successful cancer treatment, like quitting smoking and increasing exercise.



Why should you choose our thoracic cancer program?

The Thoracic Cancer Program at AdventHealth has an elite medical and surgical staff combined with a renowned clinical research team that works tirelessly to screen for, detect, diagnose and treat lung cancer with the best possible outcomes and survival rates. Every patient is assigned a team of radiation oncologists, medical oncologists and thoracic surgeons who specialize in lung cancer and prioritize personalized care for the body, mind and spirit.

The Thoracic Cancer Program offers convenient lung cancer screening locations across Central Florida and advanced radiation therapy options that may reduce the number of treatments required. It also uniquely provides genetic counseling, spiritual counseling and support groups, designated lung cancer patient navigators and access to some of the latest clinical trials available.

Let's talk in person.

For more information about the AdventHealth Thoracic Cancer Program, call 800-753-3059.

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