

Screening for Lung Cancer

Lung Cancer Causes More Deaths in the U.S. Than Any Other Type of Cancer

This is because early lung cancer often does not cause symptoms. By the time the cancer is found, it may not be curable. Lung cancer screening for patients who are at high risk can find cancer at an early stage, when it is more likely to be cured.

A recent nation-wide trial showed **low-dose spiral computed tomography (LDCT)** scans are better at finding early-stage lung cancer than chest x-rays. Screening with LDCT decreased the risk of dying from lung cancer.

Lung cancer screening isn't for everyone. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network recommends screening for certain people at high risk:

- 55-74 years old
- and more than 30 pack-years* of smoking
- and currently smoking or quit within the past 15 years

OR

- over 50 years old
 - and more than 20 pack-years* of smoking
- plus one or more of these additional risk factors
- exposure to radon
 - workplace exposure to chemicals
 - family history of lung cancer
 - disease history (COPD or pulmonary fibrosis)

Exposure to secondhand smoke is not considered a high risk factor at this time. Studies have not shown a strong link between secondhand smoke and lung cancer.

If you are high at risk, talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of screening before getting the scan. It is also important to check with your health plan to find out if the scan is covered.

The Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) is also a great resource. For free information on lung cancer screening, call the HCI Cancer Learning Center at **1-888-424-2100**.

* Note: 1 pack-year = 365 packs of cigarettes smoked, or 1 pack-year = packs smoked per day × number of years of smoking