

Lung Cancer Screening: Is it Right for Me?



If you have smoked for many years, you may want to think about screening (testing) for lung cancer with low-dose computed tomography (LDCT). Before deciding, you should think about the possible benefits and harms of lung cancer screening. This decision aid will help you talk with your doctor or health care provider to find out if lung cancer screening is right for you.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women in the United States. Many people with lung cancer do not have any symptoms when the cancer first starts. It is best to find lung cancer early before symptoms start, when the cancer is more easily treated. This is why screening is important.

Who should be screened for lung cancer?

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are advising lung cancer screening for people

50 TO 77 YEARS OLD



- Do not have any signs or symptoms of lung cancer
- Have not had lung cancer before
- Currently smoke or quit less than 15 years ago
- Are or were heavy smokers (such as those who smoked 1 pack per day for 20 years or 2 packs per day for 10 years)

What is lung cancer screening with low-dose computed tomography?

During an LDCT scan, you lie on a table and an x-ray machine uses a low dose (amount) of radiation to make detailed images of your lungs. The scan only takes a few minutes and is not painful.

What are possible benefits of lung cancer screening?

- You have a greater chance of finding lung cancer earlier, before it has spread
- May identify lung cancer even before symptoms are noticeable



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What are the possible risks of lung cancer screening?

- False alarms (having a positive screening test but not actually having lung cancer), which may cause your doctor to order more tests or procedures.
 - According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the average false alarm rate is about 356 out of 1,000 people tested each year for three years
 - Of people with a false alarm, about 18 will have an invasive procedure, like a biopsy (where a small piece of lung tissue is removed to test for cancer)
 - Of these 18 people, less than one will have a major health problem, such as bleeding in the lung, collapsed lung, or an infection, due to the procedure
- Lung cancer screening may find a lung cancer that would have never caused symptoms or harmed you in your lifetime if the cancer had not been found.
- Lung cancer screening, and any other testing, will expose you to a low dose of radiation. High amounts of radiation increase your chance of getting cancer.

Will insurance pay for my lung cancer screening?

Private insurance plans may cover lung cancer screening for people age 50 through 77 at potentially no cost to you. You should verify coverage with your insurance provider.

Medicare pays for lung cancer screening with no out-of-pocket costs for people up to age 77 if you meet the following:

- You must have a written order from your health care provider (your doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant).
- Your visit with your health care provider must be a “shared decision making visit.” In this visit your health care provider will use one or more decision aids to discuss the risks and benefits of lung cancer screening, including follow up diagnostic testing, over diagnosis, false alarms, and total radiation exposure from screening.

Your doctor or health care provider can help you find out what is needed for Medicare to cover this test. There may be extra costs for follow-up tests and/or treatments after the first screening exam. Contact your insurance company to see if the procedures are covered and how much it might cost you.

What happens if I learn I have lung cancer?

Premier Health has a team of cancer specialists who can help you. An oncology nurse navigator will be with you each step of the way throughout treatment and into recovery and survivorship. To learn more about our oncology nurse navigators, call **(844) 316-HOPE (4673)**.



Stop smoking to lower your risk

More than 8 out of every 10 lung cancer cases in the United States are from smoking. Lung cancer screening should not be done instead of quitting smoking. If you currently smoke, talk to your health care provider about tools to help you quit.

Need help quitting smoking?



Premier Community Health offers free quit smoking classes that are open to the community. These programs are designed to help you quit for good. For dates, times, and locations, call Carefinders at (866) 608-3463.

Additional support is available through these resources:

- National Quit Line: **1-800-QUIT-NOW (800) 784-8669**
- American Lung Association: **freedomfromsmoking.org**
- American Cancer Society: **cancer.org**

MD Anderson Cancer Network®

Combining advanced local cancer care with world-renowned standards and expertise.

Premier Health is a certified member of MD Anderson Cancer Network, a program of MD Anderson Cancer Center.

SOURCE: AHRQ. Lung Cancer Screening Tools: Is Lung Cancer Screening Right for Me? Accessed 1/14/2020 at <https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/decision-aids/lung-cancer-screening/patient.html>.

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