

Lung Cancer CT Screening: Is It Right for Me?

Screening for cancer means testing for cancer before there are any symptoms. Screening for some types of cancer has reduced deaths by early detection and treatment. Now there is a test that can reduce death from lung cancer through early detection. The test is not recommended for everyone and it has risks as well as benefits.

The best way to prevent lung cancer is to never smoke or stop smoking now. If you are still smoking, talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit smoking.

Q: Am I a candidate for lung cancer screening?

A: If you are:

- 55 through 80 years old
- have a 30 pack-year history of smoking (this means 1 pack a day for 30 years, 2 packs a day for 15 years, etc.)
- and are a current smoker, or have quit within the last 15 years

You are in the group at highest risk for lung cancer and screening for lung cancer is recommended for you.

The risk for lung cancer is different for each person. If you do not meet the guidelines for CT screening, we encourage you to consult with your healthcare provider about your lung health.

Q: Should I get a CT scan to screen for lung cancer?

A: Talk to your own doctor about getting a CT scan to screen for lung cancer.

Screening for lung cancer may save your life. Be sure to discuss your complete health history. Ask for a clear explanation about the possible benefits and risks of being screened for lung cancer. There are some risks and not everyone should be screened for lung cancer. Only Low Dose CT scans are recommended for screening. Chest x-rays are not recommended for lung cancer screening.

For more lung cancer support, please visit www.mylungcancersupport.org.

If you'd like to speak to someone call the American Lung Association Lung HelpLine at [1-800-LUNGUSA](tel:1-800-LUNGUSA) or [1-800-586-4872](tel:1-800-586-4872) to speak to someone directly. The helpline is staffed with nurses and respiratory questions that can answer your lung cancer questions.



Lung Cancer CT Screening: Is It Right for Me? (continued)

Q: What is a CT scan?

A: In this test, an x-ray machine scans the body and uses low doses of radiation to make a series of detailed pictures of the lungs. The x-ray machine is linked to a computer, which makes the pictures.

Q: What does it cost to have a CT scan for lung cancer?

A: Health insurance companies may cover the cost for a CT scan to screen for lung cancer. If your insurance does not cover this screening, you might have to pay for the test on your own. Be sure to check with your insurance plan to see what is covered. You may also want to ask if additional procedures are covered, should your scan show that you need them. Ask your doctor and the facility doing the CT scan to carefully and clearly explain all costs. There may be fees like facilities fees and radiologist reading fees that may not be included in the cost of the CT scan. The best thing to do is talk with your insurance company, your doctor and the facility to make sure you understand the total cost to you.

Q: What happens if I choose to get a CT scan for lung cancer?

A: There is some radiation risk with a CT scan and you may need to have additional tests and procedures. You should go to a facility that uses “best practices” for lung cancer screening. This means a hospital or screening center that has a team of experts who will clearly explain the procedure to you. The team should tell you about all the risks and benefits of the screening. They should also discuss what the results can mean and how they will follow up with you after the initial screening.

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