



LUNG CANCER ALLIANCE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LUNG CANCER SCREENING

If you are a current or former smoker, your risk of developing lung cancer may be up to 25 times higher than someone who never smoked. A CT scan is the only proven effective way to screen for lung cancer.

If you are considering being screened for lung cancer, it is important that you and your healthcare team make this informed decision together. There are important benefits to being screened for lung cancer, but as with all tests, there are also risks to consider. You should discuss the risks and benefits with your healthcare provider.

WHAT IS SCREENING?

Screening is testing with a CT scan which can identify small nodules or other abnormalities in your lungs. Finding a problem at an early stage, before there are symptoms, may make it easier to treat.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Studies have shown that screening those at high risk with CT scans before symptoms appear can find lung cancer early when it is easier to treat and more likely to be cured. In addition, lung cancer screening might also show if you have other conditions or diseases that need to be treated.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Cancer screening tests are not perfect. Some cancers can be missed (false negative) and some may look like a cancer when they are not (false positive).

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BE SCREENED?

Talk to your doctor about the results of your first screening to determine what you need to do next. For most people, a yearly scan is recommended.

Lung nodules, which are spots on the lung, are common. Some people screened will have a nodule that needs further testing. Most of these nodules will not be cancer and this will be determined by additional CT scans. A small number of nodules will need additional tests, such as other imaging tests, needle biopsy or surgery. Biopsies and surgery have other possible risks.

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WHAT ABOUT RADIATION?

You will be exposed to low levels of radiation during the test. This level of radiation is more than an x-ray but much lower than a regular CT scan that you might have if you have symptoms of cancer. To put it into perspective, you will receive about the same amount of radiation from six months in your natural environment.

WHY SHOULD I GET SCREENED?

Once you have talked to your doctor about risks and benefits, it might be useful to talk about why you may or may not want to be screened. Some questions to consider include:

- What are my reasons for wanting to be screened?
- Would I undergo surgery and possible treatment should cancer be found?
- What are my reasons for not wanting to be screened?
- Do I have all the information I need to make a decision with which I feel comfortable? If not, what other questions can my doctor help answer for me?
- Do I need to talk with someone else about this decision besides my doctor? If so, who could help me make this decision?

It is important to consider all of the benefits and risks of lung cancer screening. Here are some other important things to consider:

- Screening is not a one-time test. In order for it to work, you have to come every year for as long as your doctor recommends, so that any cancer that may be small and slow growing will be found as early as possible.
- If you smoke, it is still important to consider quitting. You might think it doesn't matter but there are lots of benefits to quitting, even now. Your healthcare team wants to help you! Don't be afraid to ask for their help.

**IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
PLEASE CALL OUR HELPLINE AT 1-800-298-2436.**