



# LUNG CANCER

SYMPTOMS, RISKS & TREATMENT



Lung cancer is the most common cancer globally, and is responsible for almost one in five deaths from cancer.

It is more common in men, contributing 17% of the total number of new cancer cases diagnosed globally in 2012, versus 9% for women in the same year.

In many cases lung cancer is highly preventable, through awareness of controllable risk factors and making healthy lifestyle choices the risk of developing lung cancer can be lowered significantly.

This month we take a closer look at lung cancer, highlighting the risks, symptoms, stages and treatment for the disease.

## RISKS AND CAUSES OF LUNG CANCER

For many people lung cancer is preventable. The risk of developing lung cancer can be reduced significantly by awareness of the risk factors and some lifestyle changes.

### Smoking

The greatest risk factor for lung cancer. The longer a person smokes and the more cigarettes they smoke per day, the greater their risk.

Quitting smoking is the single most effective prevention measure against lung cancer.

### Second hand smoke

Non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke have a 20 percent increased risk of developing lung cancer.

### Air pollution

Can contain trace amounts of cancer causing industrial substances such as diesel or arsenic.

### Family history

Genetics can increase lung cancer risk through inherited gene mutations.

### Radon

Exposure to radon gas can lead to an increased risk of developing lung cancer.

### Asbestos

Individuals who are exposed to asbestos are several times more likely to develop lung cancer.

### Previous cancers

Lung cancer is more common in people who have previously been diagnosed with cancers of the mouth or throat.



### Did you know?

*Smoking is the principal cause of lung cancer, it is estimated to be responsible for 85 percent of all cases.*



### Did you know?

*Only smoking a few cigarettes a day or smoking occasionally still increases the risk of lung cancer.*

## TYPES OF LUNG CANCER

Lung cancer is cancer which begins in the lungs, from the lungs it may spread to the lymph nodes or other organs in the body. Cancer may also spread from another part of the body and metastasize to the lungs, causing secondary lung cancer.

There are two main types of lung cancer. Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), which is most common and accounts for approximately 85% of lung cancers and Small cell lung cancer (SCLC). Both NSCLC and SCLC develop differently and are treated differently.

### Non-small cell lung cancer

There are three types of NSCLC:

**Adenocarcinoma:** Starts in mucous-producing cells at the outer edges of the lungs. This is the most common form of lung cancer diagnosed in non-smokers.

**Squamous cell carcinoma:** Develops in cells that line the airways in central areas of the lung. Men are more likely to develop squamous cell carcinoma than women, and it is most common in smokers.

**Large cell carcinoma:** Can occur anywhere in the lungs but more often starts towards the edges, and can grow quite large before symptoms are detected.

### Small cell lung cancer

SCLC usually develops in the cells of the large or small airways and is associated with smoking. SCLC cancer cells divide quicker than NSCLC, SCLC is also more aggressive and more likely to spread before detection.

## SYMPTOMS OF LUNG CANCER

Lung cancer may display no symptoms until the disease has progressed, resulting in late stage diagnosis.

Where symptoms are displayed these may include:

Persistent cough	Chest, shoulder, or back pain
Changes in volume and colour of sputum	Shortness of breath
Hoarseness	Wheezing
Repeated bronchitis or pneumonia	Coughing up blood
Neck or facial swelling	Fatigue

If lung cancer has spread, other symptoms may also occur. It is crucial to consult with a doctor if any unusual or worrying symptoms are experienced.

## How is lung cancer diagnosed?

To diagnose lung cancer, it may be necessary to carry out a range of tests. Once the presence of cancer is confirmed, further testing will identify the type and stage of the cancer.

Often the first step in lung cancer diagnosis will be a CT Scan, CT scans can detect tumours and determine if a tumour has spread beyond the lungs.

If screening identifies a problem area, a biopsy is required to determine if a tumour is cancerous.

Small pieces of suspicious tissue are removed and examined under a microscope by a pathologist. The biopsy confirms the presence of cancer and can also determine the kind of lung cancer.

When lung cancer has been diagnosed, the extent of the cancer and appropriate treatment options can be determined by staging.



### Did you know?

*In many parts of the world lung cancer rates are declining for men, but increasing for women.*

## STAGES OF LUNG CANCER

Lung cancer stage is based on tumour size, location within the lung and whether it has spread to the lymph nodes or other organs within the body. For NSCLC stages range from 1 to 4, a higher number means the cancer is more advanced.

### Non-small cell lung cancer stages

**Stage I:** Cancer is confined to the lungs and has not spread to any lymph nodes.

**Stage II:** The cancer is in the lung and nearby lymph nodes.

**Stage III:** Cancer is in the lung and in the lymph nodes in the centre of the chest.

If the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes in the centre of the chest on the same side as the tumour, it is called stage IIIA.

If the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes on the opposite side of the chest, the neck or above the collar bone, it is called stage IIIB.

**Stage IV:** Cancer has spread to both lungs, to fluid in the area around the lungs, or to another part of the body.

### Small cell lung cancer stages

SCLC may be classified as **limited stage** and **extensive stage**.

Limited stage refers to SCLC that is confined to one lung. Extensive stage refers to SCLC that has spread to the other lung or to other areas in the body.

Staging is vital for deciding how to treat lung cancer and determining how successful treatment might be.

## LUNG CANCER TREATMENT

Treatment for lung cancer depends on:

Where the cancer is located

How much it has grown or spread

The type of cancer

The individual's general health and level of fitness

A doctor or specialised cancer team will generally discuss the best treatment options with a patient, after discovering as much as possible about their cancer. They will explain the benefits and the possible side effects of treatment.

### Types of treatment

**Surgery:** Surgery for lung cancer depends on where in the lung the cancer is located and how big it is.

**Chemotherapy:** During chemotherapy anti-cancer drugs designed to stop the growth of cancer cells are administered. A combination of drugs is usually given in a series of treatments over a weekly or monthly period.

**Radiation therapy:** Uses high-energy X-rays aimed at the cancer. There are two primary types of radiotherapy. External beam radiation and internal radiation (brachytherapy).

**Targeted treatments:** Unlike chemotherapy drugs, which cannot tell the difference between normal cells and cancer cells, targeted therapies are designed specifically to attack cancer cells by attaching to or blocking targets that appear on the surfaces of those cells.

Targeted therapy may be used alone, or combined with other lung cancer treatments.



### Did you know?

*By improving lung function, physical activity may reduce the risk of lung cancer by 20 percent.*

*Many people may find it stressful discussing treatment options, and worry they will make poor choices. Often there is no single best option, it's important to take time to think through treatment options and decide with a doctor or cancer team which treatment or combination of treatments suits best.*



### Did you know?

*Tobacco kills around 6 million people each year, over 5 million deaths through direct tobacco use and 600 000 deaths through non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.*

# 10 TIPS TO HELP WITH QUITTING SMOKING

People who smoke are 15 to 30 times more likely to develop lung cancer or die from lung cancer than people who do not smoke. If you are a smoker make a commitment to quitting smoking today. Try these tips to help break the habit.

## Quit for a reason

Personal motivations in deciding to quit cigarettes will be the single most important factor in becoming a non-smoker.

Whatever your personal reasons, writing a list of the reasons you want to stop and referring to it every time you feel the urge to have a cigarette, is a great way to temper your craving.

## Bin the paraphernalia

Get rid of ashtrays, lighters and any cigarettes you still have lying around. You don't want any reminders. Don't be tempted to keep some cigarettes 'just in case', it will only make giving in to temptation that bit easier.

## Speak to your doctor

Your doctor will be able to advise on the various smoking cessation medications and therapies available to you.

Your doctor may also be able to advise on local support groups and smoking cessation clinics.

## Ask your friends and family for help

Let your friends and family know you are quitting and seek their support. You will find that they can be a great source of encouragement when you feel tempted to smoke.

Consider asking a family member or work colleague who also smokes to try giving up along with you. You can support each other.

## Don't get hung up on weight gain

Many smokers are reluctant to try and quit as they fear gaining weight as a result. Although some people may gain a few pounds in the effort to quit smoking, the resultant health benefits of being a non-smoker far outweigh the additional pounds.

## Eat lots of Fruit and Veg

Your appetite may increase while you are in the process of quitting cigarettes, keep healthy snacks to hand and drink plenty of water.

## Fill the void

Smoking is as much a habit as an addiction. Be prepared for how you will fill the void or occupy yourself at those times of the day when you would normally smoke.

Many people smoke to unwind. Think about how you will relax once you quit, taking up daily exercise is a great way to relax and make you feel positive about the new healthier you.

## Avoid the triggers

Many people don't succeed in giving up because they don't take steps to avoid their smoking triggers during the initial stages of quitting. Be aware of triggers and avoid them.

## Reward yourself

Smoking is an expensive habit, as you quit, keep track of how much money you haven't spent and think about how you would like to spend it.

## Keep trying

People who eventually stop smoking have often made three or four previous attempts, before becoming a non-smoker. So, if you aren't successful this time, keep trying. Stay positive and learn from your previous attempt.



## YOUR INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE COVER

Lung cancer, unfortunately, remains one of the deadliest forms of cancer, even if detected early.

As 85 percent of lung cancer cases can be avoided by stopping to smoke, the way to protect ourselves is a no brainer. Stop smoking.

A healthy lifestyle including healthy eating, regular exercise and spending time outdoors in the fresh air, helps protect against all sorts of cancer and a multitude of other diseases.

At Allianz Partners our core plans cover in-patient, day-care and out-patient oncology treatment. Cutting edge treatment options are at your disposal.

Dr Ulrike Sucher, Medical Director, Allianz Partners.