



LUNG CANCER ALLIANCE

UNDERSTANDING

**LUNG
CANCER
SCREENING**

1-800-298-2436

LungCancerAlliance.org

WHAT IS CANCER SCREENING?

A test to check for disease in someone who does not have any symptoms. Some examples of cancer screening include mammograms for breast cancer, pap smears for cervical cancer and colonoscopies for colon cancer. The goal of screening is to find cancer early when it is more treatable and even curable.

For lung cancer, low dose CT (LDCT) scans are the only proven method. Chest x-rays are not effective.

WHO SHOULD BE SCREENED FOR LUNG CANCER?

You should consider being screened for lung cancer if you are between 55-80, have at least a 30 pack year* smoking history and currently smoke or quit within 15 years.

There is some research to support screening people who may be younger or who have smoked less but who also have another risk factor, such as having another lung disease, being exposed to radon or other cancer-causing substances or having a family member with lung cancer. At this time, screening for groups with these risk factors is not covered by insurance or Medicare but it is always good to talk with your doctor about your risk.

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER SCREENING?

Studies have shown that screening those at high risk with LDCT scans before symptoms are present 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.

ARE THERE RISKS INVOLVED WITH SCREENING?

All cancer screening tests have risks. LDCT scans often find spots in the lungs that are not cancers. If they look a certain way or are over a certain size, an additional scan or procedure may be needed to diagnose or rule out cancer. There is also a small amount of radiation used in the test.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BE SCREENED?

For most people, a yearly scan is recommended until they are no longer eligible. Talk to your doctor about the results of your screening to determine what you need to do next.

*How to calculate your pack years: Average number of packs smoked per day X number of years as a smoker = your pack years (Example: 1 pack a day for 20 years = 20 pack years)

IS SCREENING COVERED BY INSURANCE?

Screening is now covered by most insurance plans and Medicare, as long as you meet the criteria described.

WHERE SHOULD I BE SCREENED?

You should be screened for lung cancer only in an experienced center that follows approved guidelines for lung cancer screening, such as a Lung Cancer Alliance Screening Center of Excellence. To find a center near you, call our HelpLine at 1-800-298-2436 or visit our website at www.lungcanceralliance.org.

CHOOSING A SCREENING PROGRAM

If you do not live near a Screening Center of Excellence, here are some questions to ask your local screening center to determine if they are screening responsibly:

1. What test do you use to screen for lung cancer?

The test should be a LDCT scan, which means that the radiation amount is much lower than in a regular CT scan.

2. Who will interpret the scan?

LDCT scans can be more challenging to read than regular CT scans. It is best for a radiologist with experience reading and reporting LDCT scans of the chest to be the one to interpret your scan.

3. What guidelines will be used if something is found?

Several professional organizations have developed guidelines specifically for lung cancer screening and your center should consistently follow one of them.

4. What will happen if something is found?

Your screening program should work with your primary care provider to arrange any follow-up tests or care that you need, preferably from a team of doctors who will work together to evaluate and treat you.

5. Who is eligible for screening in your program?

Currently, only people who are older and have a significant smoking history should be screened for lung cancer, unless it is through a research study (see "Who should be screened for lung cancer?"). Be sure your program takes these recommendations seriously.

Contact us if you have questions

1-800-298-2436 | www.lungcanceralliance.org



LUNG CANCER ALLIANCE

SAVING LIVES AND ADVANCING
RESEARCH BY EMPOWERING THOSE
LIVING WITH AND AT RISK FOR
LUNG CANCER

WHAT WE DO

- Offer personalized support, information and referral services at no cost through a team of trained, dedicated staff members to help patients, their loved ones and those at risk.
- Advocate for increased lung cancer research funding and equitable access, coverage and reimbursement for screening, treatment, diagnostics and testing.
- Conduct nationwide education campaigns about the disease, risk and early detection.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Become a Volunteer
 - Join Shine a Light on Lung Cancer
 - Sign up for a Lung Love Run/Walk
 - Contact Congress and the President
 - Donate
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The content of this brochure has been reviewed by members of our Medical and Professional Advisory Board.

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