



Lung Cancer Prevention

What are the chances that I will develop lung cancer?

The #1 cause of lung cancer is exposure to tobacco smoke. Your chances increase with the amount you smoke and the number of years you have smoked. The more you smoke or are exposed to smoke from others (second-hand smoke), the greater your chances of developing lung cancer. People who have never smoked may develop lung cancer, but their chance is much less than people who smoke or who used to smoke.

What can I do to decrease my risk of developing lung cancer?

The best way to lower your risk is to avoid smoke. It is never too late to stop smoking, but the sooner you stop, the better. Even if you can't quit completely, cutting back on the number of cigarettes you smoke can help, but cutting down is *not* as good as quitting completely.

There are many strategies to help you stop smoking, including counseling, nicotine replacement and medications. It takes most people several tries before they quit for good, so don't be discouraged. If at first you don't succeed, keep trying!

Are there other ways to decrease my risk of getting lung cancer?

There are many things that are reported to change your risk, but none have been proven. These include:

- eating plenty of fruit
- exercise
- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like ibuprofen)
- inhaled corticosteroids (used for emphysema and asthma)
- statin medications (used for high cholesterol)

Eating more fruit and exercising is not likely to harm you, but speak with your healthcare provider before making any major changes in your diet or activity level.

Are there things that increase my chances of getting lung cancer?

There are several things that we know increase your risk of getting lung cancer. There are other things that *may* increase your risk but we don't have enough

information to say for sure. These things increase your risk for lung cancer:

- tobacco smoke
- asbestos
- radon
- high doses of supplemental beta-carotene (found in some vitamins)

Things that may increase your risk of getting lung cancer include:

- supplements with high doses of vitamin E
- hormone replacement therapy (estrogen plus progestin)
- heavy alcohol use

If you're thinking about, or are already taking any of these, talk to your healthcare provider about their risks and benefits.

What about screening for lung cancer?

At this time, we do not recommend routinely looking for lung cancer in people without symptoms. Getting a chest x-ray to look for early lung cancer (before people develop symptoms) has not been proven to save lives. Studies are under way to see if CT ("cat") scans can find early lung cancer, but the results are not available yet. Talk to your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of screening for you.

Summary

- stop smoking
- speak with your healthcare provider about ways to stop smoking
- talk to your healthcare provider about what you can do to decrease your risk for lung cancer

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