

Finding Lung Cancer Early

There is a test that can help find lung cancer before it causes any symptoms. This test is called a low-dose CT scan (LDCT). It can help find lung cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful. Finding lung cancer earlier can help lower a person's risk of dying from the disease.



Should I get screened for lung cancer?

The American Cancer Society recommends yearly screening for lung cancer with an LDCT scan for people ages 50 to 80 who:

- Smoke or used to smoke

AND

- Have at least a 20 pack-year smoking history

A pack-year is equal to smoking 1 pack (or about 20 cigarettes) per day for a year. This could mean:

- Smoking 1 pack a day for 20 years, or
- Smoking 2 packs a day for 10 years

Talk with your health care provider if you think you might be at higher risk of lung cancer. They can help you decide if you should get screened.



How is lung cancer screening done?

An LDCT scan is the test used to screen for lung cancer. It's like an x-ray but shows more detail. An LDCT scan can help find changes in your lungs that might be cancer.

The CT scanner is a big, ring-shaped machine. You lie on a flat table that slides back and forth inside the hole in the middle of the scanner. You'll be asked to hold your breath for a short time. You'll hear buzzing and clicking as the scanner turns on and off. The scan doesn't hurt and only takes a few minutes once you're in the machine.

Before the scan, you may be asked to undress and put on a gown. You'll need to take off any clothing or objects with metal, such as zippers, underwire bras, jewelry, or piercings. Also, let the technologist know if you have a pacemaker or other medical device in your body. You will still be able to have an LDCT scan, but extra care will be taken.



What do screening results mean?

A radiologist (a health care provider who is trained to read LDCT scans) will look at your scan and send the results to your health care provider. You might need to have more tests if changes are seen. It is very common for LDCT scans to show small areas called nodules. Most nodules aren't cancer. But it is important to find out if the scan shows anything that might need to be treated.



Will my insurance pay for lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer screening is covered by Medicare and many private health insurance plans. Your health care provider's office can help you find out if your insurance will pay for the scan.



What can I do to help lower my risk for lung cancer?

If you smoke, quit. Getting screened for lung cancer does not replace quitting smoking. The American Cancer Society has tips and resources to help improve your chances of quitting for good. Visit our website at cancer.org/quittobacco or call us at **1-800-227-2345** for more information.



Visit cancer.org/findlungcancerearly to learn more about lung cancer screening.