

Do You Need Lung Cancer Screening?

Screening for lung cancer can help find changes in the lungs that may be cancer. Finding lung cancer early through screening may help lower a person's risk of dying from the disease.

Is lung cancer screening right for you?

The American Cancer Society recommends yearly screening for lung cancer with a low-dose CT (LDCT) scan for people ages 50 to 80 who:

- Smoke or used to smoke

AND

- Have at least a 20 pack-year history of smoking (A pack-year is equal to smoking 1 pack or about 20 cigarettes per day for a year. For example, a person could have a 20 pack-year history by smoking 1 pack a day for 20 years, or by smoking 2 packs a day for 10 years.)

Before deciding to be screened, talk with your health care provider about the purpose of screening, including how it is done and what the benefits, limits, and possible harms are. If you still smoke, ask about resources to help you quit.

How does an LDCT scan work?

An LDCT scan is the test used to screen for lung cancer. It shows pictures of a cross-section of your lungs. The test shows more detail than an x-ray. An LDCT scan can help find changes that might be cancer and can show a tumor's shape and size.

LDCT scans expose people to a small amount of radiation. But experts agree the benefits of screening greatly outweigh the risks. Talk with your health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

What is it like to get an LDCT scan?

The 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 switches on and off. The scan is painless and takes only a few minutes once you're in the machine.

A radiology technologist does the LDCT scan. You'll be alone in the exam room during the LDCT scan, but the technologist will be able to see, hear, and talk to you at all times.

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 implanted medical device. You will still be able to have an LDCT scan, but extra care will be taken.

Does insurance cover 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 to expect when getting your screening results

After the scan, 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. LDCT scans often show very small areas in the lung called nodules that end up not being cancer. Still, getting a call that something was found on your scan and that you might need more tests can be scary. Talk with your health care provider to learn more about your results.

What the screening results mean

Here are some ways the results of an LDCT scan might be reported:

- There are no problems seen in your lungs, or the nodules seen do not look like cancer. You should get another LDCT scan in a year.
- The results are not clear. Your health care provider may want to watch you closely and do another LDCT scan soon to look for changes. Ask your health care provider what to expect.
- Your LDCT scan shows problems in your lungs that probably are not cancer, but they might get worse over time. Talk with your health care provider about what you need to do.
- Your LDCT scan shows something in your lungs that may be cancer. You may need more testing to see if it's cancer. Ask your health care provider what your next steps will be.

How you can help lower your lung cancer risk

If you smoke, quit. Getting screened for lung cancer does not replace quitting smoking. Talk with your health care provider about your risk of lung cancer. They can refer you to a smoking cessation program if needed.

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.



To learn more about lung cancer screening, visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/findlungcancerearly or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.

