

Lung Cancer Screening: Is It Right for You?



Screening tests check for cancer in people who don't have any signs or symptoms. These tests may help find cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

A low-dose CT (LDCT) scan is the test used to screen for lung cancer. It's a type of x-ray that helps health care providers look at your lungs. The scan is painless and takes just a few minutes. Before the scan, you may be asked to undress and put on a gown.

Your health care provider can tell you more about lung cancer screening and determine if you are eligible. Together, you can decide if lung cancer screening with LDCT is right for you.

How many pack-years have I smoked?

		Number of years smoked
X		Average number of packs* smoked per day
=		Pack years

*1 pack = 20 cigarettes

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 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.



What to know about lung cancer screening

- **An LDCT scan gives more detailed pictures than a standard chest x-ray.** Standard chest x-rays are not recommended for lung cancer screening.
- **LDCT scans are covered by Medicare and many private health insurance plans.** Check to see if your insurance will pay for the scan.
- **Before an LDCT scan, you'll need to remove metal objects.** That includes any clothing or objects with metal, such as zippers, underwire bras, jewelry, or piercings.
- **More tests may be needed.** People who choose to be screened should be willing to get additional tests and treatment if something is found. If your health care provider suggests more tests, it doesn't always mean you have lung cancer. Many people who smoke or used to smoke have lung nodules that can be seen on an LDCT scan. Your health care provider may want to take another look at the nodules if you have them.
- **Screening may result in overtreatment.** Sometimes, screening leads to finding and treating a cancer that would never have caused symptoms. Talk with your health care provider about overtreatment if you have questions or concerns.
- **LDCT exposes people to a small amount of radiation.** It's less than the dose from a standard CT scan. Experts agree the benefits of screening greatly outweigh the very small chance that annual LDCT scans (over many years) could cause cancer.
- **Screening helps reduce the risk of dying from lung cancer.** When lung cancer is found early, treatment is more likely to be successful.
- **If you choose to be screened, it is important to return each year for an LDCT scan.**
- **Quitting smoking can help reduce your risk of lung cancer.** Lung cancer screening does not protect you from the harms of smoking. If you smoke, talk with your health care provider about a plan and tools to help you quit.



For more information and support, 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.