

Understanding Lung Cancer Screening



GO2 Patient Support Services

Support for Everyone Impacted by Lung Cancer

We put people living with and at risk for lung cancer at the center of everything we do. From finding care to staying informed and building your resources, we are your community. As your friends, your guides, your advocates, your support system, GO2 is your go-to.

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This booklet was created to help you learn about lung cancer screenings, why they are important, and how to get started.

If you have questions about lung cancer screening or lung cancer, call our free HelpLine at 1-800-298-2436 or email support@go2.org.

What Is Lung Cancer Screening?

Cancer screening is a test to check for disease in people who do not have any symptoms.

Some examples of cancer screening include mammograms for breast cancer and colonoscopies for colorectal cancer. The goal of screening is to find cancer early when it is more treatable and even curable.

A lung cancer screening is quick and painless, using a low-dose CT (LDCT) scan. This is the only proven method to screen for lung cancer.

To learn more, see the "Screening Saves Lives" video on our website at go2.org/screening.



Who Should Be Screened?

If your smoking history places you at higher risk for lung cancer and you meet the age guidelines, you should think about having yearly lung cancer screenings.

Being at higher risk for lung cancer means:

1 Having smoked at least 1 pack a day for 20 years, or 2 packs a day for 10 years, and so on. This is known as "pack years."

AND

2 Being 50 years of age or older.

How to know your pack years: Average the number of packs smoked per day x the number of years you smoked = your pack years.



Why Have Lung Cancer Screenings?

- Studies have shown that screening for lung cancer with LDCT scans before symptoms occur can find lung cancer early, when it is easier to treat and possibly cure.
- 2. LDCT scans find spots on the lung called nodules. Most nodules are not lung cancer and will never become lung cancer. However, lung nodules need to be watched over time to see if they grow or change.
- 3. Lung cancer screening might also show if you have other conditions or diseases that are not cancer but need to be treated.

X-rays are different than LDCT scans. X-rays can't always see small nodules or early cancer. LDCT scans can.



Common Questions

What happens during a LDCT scan?

LDCT scans are quick, painless, and take 1 minute. No needles or dyes are used. You will be fully clothed, and there is no need to limit eating or drinking before the test.

During LDCT scans, 3-D pictures of your lungs are taken using a small amount of radiation. This level of radiation is more than a chest X-ray but is much lower than other types of CT scans.

Are there risks with LDCT scans?

There are very few risks with LDCT scans. Risks can include:

- Receiving a small amount of radiation.
- A "false positive" result. This means the scan shows a spot on the lung that looks like cancer, but it is found to be normal with more testing.
- A "false negative" result. This means there is cancer present, but the scan did not show it.

Sometimes more testing is needed after a LDCT scan to gather additional information. Tests could include a follow-up LDCT scan to see if a spot on the lung has changed over time. In some cases, a cancer test known as a biopsy is needed to know if a spot on the lung is cancer.

It is important to be screened every year for as long as your healthcare team recommends it, even if your last scan was clear.

How often should I be screened?

Screening is an ongoing yearly process to ensure your lungs are healthy and to find any changes as early as possible.

This allows your healthcare team to compare new LDCT scans with past ones and see if there are any changes over the year. This is important because lung cancer can grow and spread quickly.

Is screening covered by insurance?

Medicare and most private insurance plans will cover a low-dose CT screening with no out-of-pocket cost if you meet their high-risk criteria. However, additional testing and follow-up scans between screenings may have a cost, such as a copay or deductible. Contact your insurance company to find out what they cover, or ask a member of your healthcare team for help.

What Are My Next Steps?

- Ask a member of your healthcare team for a lung cancer screening using a LDCT scan.
- Ask to be referred to a screening center that follows approved guidelines for lung cancer screening. For example, there are GO2designated Centers of Excellence (COE) across the nation that meet these guidelines. Find a screening center at go2.org/screening-centers.
- 3. Ask for a radiologist who has experience with LDCT scans of the chest to read your scan.
- 4. If a spot is found on your LDCT scan, follow up with your healthcare team for more testing and a plan for the next steps in your care.
- 5. If your LDCT scan is normal, go ahead and make your appointment for next year.

Note: Lung cancer screening with LDCT scan is recommended by leading advocacy, government, and medical groups, including GO2 for Lung Cancer, federal government agencies (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services), the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), American College of Radiology, and the American Cancer Society.

For more information about screening, lung cancer, current treatments, support options, and/or referrals to other resources, please visit go2.org, call our HelpLine at 1-800-298-2436, or email support@go2.org.



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Confronting Lung Cancer Starts Here

