



PATIENT SUPPORT

Understanding a Lung Cancer Diagnosis

What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer occurs when damaged cells in the lungs grow out of control and form tumors.

What are the 2 main types of lung cancer?

Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)

More common

Slower growing

Most common subtypes include adenocarcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma

Small cell lung cancer (SCLC)

Less common

Faster growing

Subtypes are currently being studied

What are the known risk factors for lung cancer?

- Smoking cigarettes now or in the past
- Being exposed to radon gas or chemicals such as arsenic, asbestos, beryllium, uranium, or Agent Orange
- Being exposed to secondhand smoke
- Having a family history of lung cancer
- Radiation therapy to the chest area

What are the common symptoms of lung cancer?

- Coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath
- Feeling tired
- Pain in the chest, shoulder, upper back, or arm
- Coughing up blood
- Frequent pneumonia or bronchitis
- Not wanting to eat and/or weight loss

What are the common tests used to diagnose lung cancer?

- **Scans** show the size of the tumor(s) and where they are in your body. They may include CT (computed tomography), MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), and PET (positron emission tomography) scans.
- **Biopsy** uses a sample of tissue or fluid taken from your body to confirm cancer is present and learn what type it is.
- **Biomarker testing** looks for “targets” in cancer cells that can be treated with targeted therapy. All people with NSCLC should have biomarker testing.

Questions? Email us at support@go2.org or call our HelpLine at 1-800-298-2436.

What are the common treatments?

Your healthcare team will discuss treatment options with you. They may include one or more of the following:



Surgery may be performed to remove cancer and may also include removing part(s) of the lung affected by the cancer.



Chemotherapy uses drugs that kill cells that grow quickly, like cancer cells.



Radiation therapy uses high-energy beams to kill or shrink cancer cells or prevent them from spreading.



Targeted therapy includes drugs that find and kill cancer by attacking a “target” in cancer cells, known as a biomarker.



Immunotherapy includes drugs that use your body’s immune system to fight cancer.

What are the common side effects of treatment?

The side effects of cancer treatment will depend on the type of cancer treatment you receive, how long you receive it, and your body’s response. You may not have any side effects, or you may have just a few. Common side effects may include:

- Nausea
- Hair loss
- Numbness in hands and feet (neuropathy)
- Feeling tired
- Loss of appetite

It is always important to talk to your healthcare team about ways to prevent or manage side effects before you have them.



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