



Lung Cancer Screening

A 15 minute test might save your life...

“Screening” is checking for lung cancer before you have any symptoms or problems. **If lung cancer is found early and treated, it may help you live longer.**

Lung Cancer Facts

You can have lung cancer before you notice any symptoms, for example: a cough, chest pain, or trouble breathing.

- Lung cancer happens when abnormal cells form in the lungs and can spread to other parts of your body. Most lung cancer cases in the United States are caused by smoking tobacco.
- Each year lung cancer kills more people than breast, prostate, and colon cancer combined. Most of the time, this is because it is found too late and has spread, which is why screening early is so important.

How is Lung Cancer Screening Done?

The only recommended screening for lung cancer is a low-dose Computed Tomography or LDCT.

- A LDCT takes very detailed pictures of your lungs to find lung cancer.
- The LDCT takes less than 15 minutes and is painless. No needles or contrast (dye) are used.
- A CT is also called a “CAT scan.”
- The LDCT machine is open; your head and feet stay outside the machine.
- It is important to schedule a low-dose CT scan every year because new cancers can grow quickly.

Who can have Lung Cancer Screening?

If you smoke cigarettes or quit in the past 15 years, you can be at high risk for lung cancer. Screening is for people who meet ALL 3 of these guidelines:

- You are 50 to 77 years old, AND
- You have smoked at least 20 “pack-years” (see chart) and are still smoking, or quit smoking less than 15 years ago,
- AND You have no other major health problems that would stop you from getting lung cancer treatment like surgery or radiation.



How to Get Pack-Years

Packs per Day		Years Smoked	=	Pack Years
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Low-dose CT is quick and painless!

Help Quitting Smoking

Quitting smoking is the best way to lower your chance of getting lung cancer!

- Even if you are not ready to quit yet, you can have lung cancer screening.
- Talk with your doctor, visit these websites (by clicking on the web site link if online) call or text using the information to the right.

Washington State Quitline

www.quitnow.net/mve/quitnow?qnclient=washington
1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or
Texting READY to 200-400

Talk with Your Doctor

It is important to talk with your medical provider to get all the facts and then decide what is right for you. Like most screening tests, there are possible benefits and harms to LDCT.

Possible Benefits of Screening

Find and Treat Cancer Early	Lung cancer that is found early, before you have any symptoms, is more likely to be cured with surgery.
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Prevent Deaths	Finding lung cancer early with low dose CT may prevent 1 out of 8 deaths from this disease.
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Possible Harms of Screening

False Alarm	A False Alarm is when the screening result looks like cancer, but is not cancer. The result might lead to more testing or medical procedures, which can have risks.
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Overdiagnosis	Overdiagnosis is when a small or slow growing cancer is found with screening that would never have caused death or harm. Because it is hard to know this, these cancers are usually treated even when they would not have caused problems.
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Radiation	Like an x-ray, LDCT uses radiation, a type of energy that given at high doses or many times, may be harmful or cause cancer. Studies show the risk with LDCT is very low. The amount of radiation with LDCT is much less than a regular CT scan, but a little more than an x-ray.
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Insurance

LDCT screening guidelines were changed in March 2021: The age dropped from 55 to 50 years and smoking history dropped from 30 to 20 pack years.

- Even if you are not ready to quit yet, you can have lung cancer screening.
- Most insurance companies pay for LDCT screening.
- Call your insurer to check if they are covering the new guidelines for LDCT screening, code "71271."
- If you need help to pay for this test, please contact our Patient Financial Services Department. You can go online to www.confluencehealth.org/patient-information/financial-assistance/charity-care/ to learn more or call 509-436-4020, 888-499-4801 (toll free) or email charitycare@confluencehealth.org

For More Information

Contact your Primary Care Physician

Should I Screen?

shouldiscreen.com is an online tool to see if lung cancer screening is right for you, from the University of Michigan.

Last updated 8/26/21 by Knowledge Map™ and Lung Cancer screening Program (DHMC) *Lung and PackYears History images from AHRQ "Is Lung Cancer Screening Right for Me?" and data ** from Benefits and harms based on results of the National Lung Screening Trial, U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (2021). Screening for lung cancer: USPTF recommendation statement. JAMA, 325(10):962-970, and UpToDate® Screening for lung cancer (May, 2021)