

Lung cancer and COVID-19: impact of the pandemic on screening and diagnosis



Before the pandemic, about every 2½ minutes, someone in the United States was diagnosed with lung cancer.¹ However, screening rates and diagnoses have declined during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is concerning since the early detection of lung cancer may help lead to better overall survival outcomes.^{2,3}

A Decline in Diagnoses

The number of **all new cancer cases in the United States decreased by 74%** in April 2020, compared to April 2019.⁴

74%
All new cancer cases

A delayed diagnosis may lead to detection of the disease at a more advanced stage, which **could result in an increase of cancer deaths in the United States.**⁵

Why Lung Cancer Screening Matters

Based on findings from the American Lung Association in 2020

- When diagnosed at an early stage, lung cancer has a 5-year survival rate of nearly 60%, but when diagnosed at a late stage, the relative 5-year survival rate decreases to only 6%.¹
- Once symptoms develop, the cancer has likely reached an advanced stage.^{1,6}



It's important that those at high risk for lung cancer talk with their doctor and determine if they are eligible for a screening.

Who Is Eligible for Lung Cancer Screening?



According to recommendations from the US Preventive Services Task Force⁷:

- Adults aged 50-80 years, and
- With at least a 20 pack-year history of smoking and who currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years



Screening should be done annually and discontinued once a person has not smoked for 15 years or develops a health problem that substantially limits life expectancy or the ability to have lung surgery.⁷

Barriers to Lung Cancer Screening



According to the American Lung Association, 5.7% of Americans at high risk for lung cancer were screened in 2019¹

Those considered at high risk for lung cancer may experience **feelings of shame and denial** due to the stigma surrounding common risk factors for the disease, such as smoking.⁸

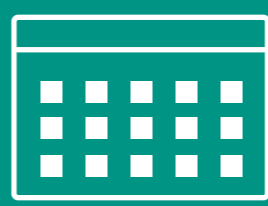
These feelings can lead to a delay in the early detection of lung cancer, which could otherwise improve prognosis and outcomes.¹



The Time Is Now



Speak up and talk to your doctor if you are at high risk for lung cancer and determine if you are eligible for screening.



Rebook any missed appointments or screenings due to COVID-19.



For additional information, please visit:
Lung Cancer Foundation of America
lcfamerica.org

GO₂ Foundation for Lung Cancer
go2foundation.org

Lung Cancer Research Foundation
lungcancerresearchfoundation.org

References:

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