

Lung Cancer

What you should know

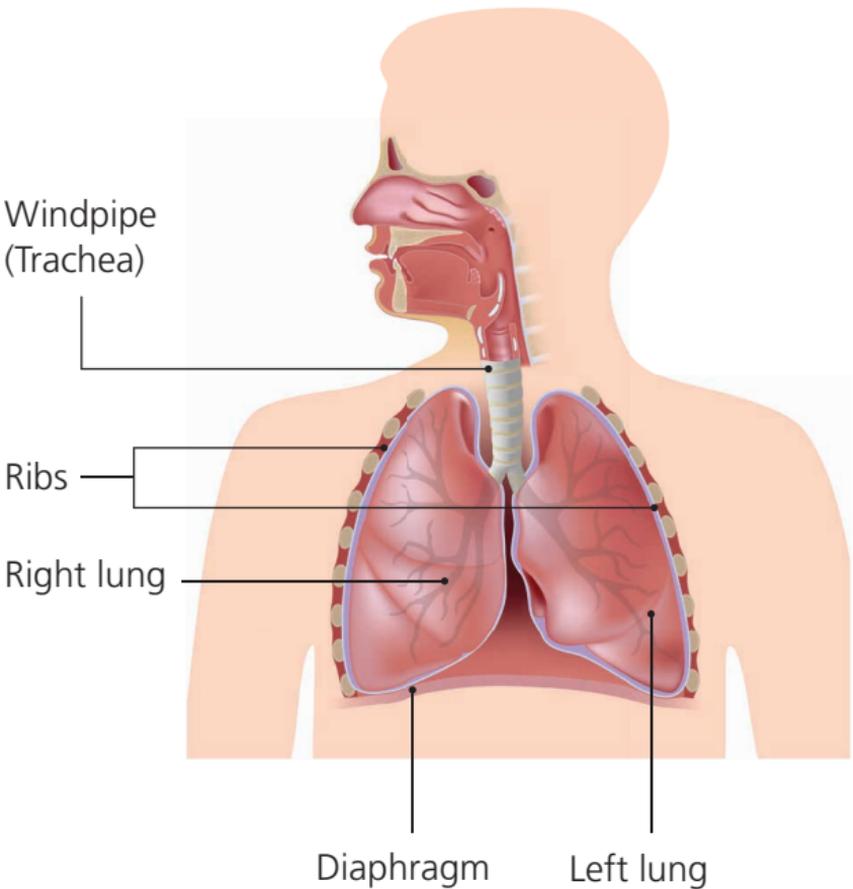


**Irish
Cancer
Society**

What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer is when normal cells in your lung grow in an abnormal way to form a mass of cells called a tumour.

The lungs are a pair of organs found in your chest. Your lungs form part of the respiratory system in your body, which allows you to breathe.



What increases my risk of lung cancer?



Smoking: Smoking causes nearly 9 in every 10 lung cancers. The longer you have smoked, the greater the risk. Smoking a large number of cigarettes and breathing in other people's smoke also increase your risk.



Family history: Having a parent, brother or sister with lung cancer.



Chemicals: Being exposed to certain chemicals such as asbestos, metal dust, paints and diesel exhaust.



Radon gas: Being exposed to radon gas, in areas where levels are high.

Risk factors increase your chance of getting lung cancer. Having a risk factor doesn't mean you will get lung cancer. Sometimes people with no risk factors may get the disease.

What are the symptoms of lung cancer?

- Difficulty breathing, or wheezing
- A cough that doesn't go away or a change in a long-term cough
- Repeated chest infections that won't go away, even after antibiotics
- Feeling more tired than usual
- A hoarse voice
- Coughing up blood-stained phlegm
- Pain in your chest, especially when you cough or breathe in
- Loss of appetite / weight loss
- Swelling around your face and neck
- Difficulty swallowing.

These symptoms can be caused by other things, but always get them checked out.

What should I do if I have any symptoms?

If you have any symptoms or changes in your body that you are worried about, it's important to have them checked by your GP (family doctor). The chances are it will not be cancer. Getting your symptoms checked is not wasting anyone's time. The sooner cancer is spotted, the more likely you are to recover from it.

How is lung cancer diagnosed?

If your doctor thinks your symptoms need to be investigated, you will have more tests. Tests that can help to diagnose lung cancer include:



Chest x-ray: This checks the state of your lungs.



CT scan: This is a type of X-ray that can build up a detailed picture of the lung.



Bronchoscopy: This test uses a long tube with a camera at one end to view the tissues in your lung.



Lung biopsy: Examining a sample of tissue taken from your lung.



If you are diagnosed with lung cancer our booklet has more information.

How can I reduce my risk of lung cancer?



Don't smoke: By far the most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of lung cancer is to stop smoking. Cigarettes, pipes, cigars, 'roll-ups' and low-tar cigarettes all increase the risk. It's never too late to quit. The sooner you stop, the more you reduce your risk.



Avoid second-hand smoke: Breathing in other people's smoke also exposes you to harmful chemicals.



Look out for any changes that are not normal for you: You are more likely to survive cancer if you spot it at an early stage. Talk to your doctor if you notice anything unusual, such as pain, unusual bleeding or new symptoms that don't clear up after a few weeks.

See the end of this leaflet for tips on how to reduce your risk of cancer in general.

Can I be screened for lung cancer?

Testing for lung cancer when you have no symptoms is called screening. There is no lung cancer screening programme in Ireland at present. If you are worried or feel you may be at risk, talk to your GP.



12 ways to reduce your cancer risk



Do not smoke



Avoid second-hand smoke



Be a healthy weight



Be physically active in everyday life



Have a healthy diet



Avoid alcohol



Avoid too much sun



Avoid pollutants



Get screened for cancer



Breastfeed your baby / Limit HRT



Get vaccinations - Hepatitis B for babies / HPV for girls



Find out if you are exposed to radon gas in your area

Some facts about lung cancer

9/10

Smoking causes nearly 9 out of 10 lung cancers



The sooner you stop smoking, the more you reduce your risk



More people die from lung cancer than any other cancer

40+

Lung cancer usually affects people over the age of 40

70

The average age of diagnosis is about 70 years



How common is lung cancer?

Lung cancer is one of the most common cancers in Ireland. Around 2,200 people are diagnosed with it every year.

For more information...

If you are worried or have questions about lung cancer or any cancer...



Call our Cancer Nurseline

Freephone 1800 200 700



or email cancernurseline@irishcancer.ie

for confidential advice, support and information.

Visit our Daffodil Centres where our nurses can give you advice about healthy lifestyles and reducing your risk of cancer. To find out where your local Daffodil Centre is, email daffodilcentreinfo@irishcancer.ie

Visit our website www.cancer.ie for more information on lung cancer and ways to reduce your risk of cancer.

Want to stop smoking?

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to reduce your risk of cancer.

If you would like advice or support on quitting, call the HSE Quit Team on CallSave **1800 201 203**, Freetext **QUIT** to **50100** or visit www.quit.ie



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