



## What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer is cancer that starts in the lungs. Cancer is a disease where cancer cells grow out of control, taking over normal cells and organs in the body. Lung cancer is one of the most common kinds of cancer. It is the leading cause of cancer death in both men and women. On average, 70 Canadians will be diagnosed with lung cancer every day.

Lung cancer almost always begins in one lung. It can then spread to lymph nodes or other parts of the chest including the other lung. Lung cancer can spread (metastasize) to the bones, brain, liver or other organs.

## Symptoms of lung cancer:

- A cough that doesn't go away and gets worse over time
- Chest pain that doesn't go away
- Coughing up blood
- Feeling short of breath
- Wheezing
- Losing your voice (hoarseness)
- Getting sick with pneumonia and bronchitis often
- Swollen neck and face
- Not hungry, losing weight without trying
- Feeling tired

People with these symptoms could have lung cancer, or it could be something else. If you have these symptoms, please see your family physician. The doctor can decide what's causing the symptoms and how to treat them.



## How is lung cancer diagnosed?

There are many tests used to diagnose lung cancer. Not all tests are necessary or appropriate for every person. Your doctor will choose which tests should be done.

- **Chest x-ray**
- **CT scan** (also called a CAT scan)  
CT scanners take many detailed x-rays that are blended together by a computer. You lie down in the long tube of the CT scanner and stay very still as the x-rays are being taken.
- **Sputum analysis** The doctor collects your sputum (the phlegm you cough up) and tests it for cancerous cells.
- **Bronchoscopy** The doctor slides a thin, flexible tube with a camera on the end (a bronchoscope) through your mouth or nose and into your lungs. The doctor looks for a tumour and can take samples through this tube. You need to be sedated for this test.
- **Other tests** such as a pulmonary function (breathing) test, needle biopsy, bone scan or MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) may also be scheduled for you.

## Why all these tests before starting treatment?

There are two main types of lung cancer: small cell and non-small cell. There are also four stages of lung cancer. The best treatment is chosen once the doctors know both the type of cancer and the stage of cancer. This may take several different tests. Each test is very important.



## How is lung cancer treated?

The choice of treatment depends on the type and stage of lung cancer.

Treatment choices include:

- Surgery;
- Chemotherapy;
- Radiation; or
- A combination of treatments.

## How can lung cancer be prevented?

- ✓ Don't smoke. If you do smoke, plan to quit.
- ✓ Stay away from second hand smoke.
- ✓ Check your home for radon.

For more information on radon and ways to quit smoking, please contact the Lung Association.

- In 2012 an estimated 25,600 Canadians will be diagnosed with lung cancer and 20,100 will die of it.
- Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women.
- Lung cancer can strike anyone over the age of 20.



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# Lung Cancer

## Basic Information



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