

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer occurs when cells in the lung grow and multiply uncontrollably, damaging surrounding tissue and interfering with the normal function of the lung. The cells can spread to other parts of the body. When the disease spreads, it is still called lung cancer.

Smoking is responsible for 87 percent of all lung cancer cases in the United States. Eliminating tobacco use is the key to reducing the impact of this disease.

Symptoms

Symptoms of lung cancer vary from person to person and may include:

- a cough that will not go away and gets worse over time
- constant chest pain, or arm and shoulder pain
- coughing up blood
- shortness of breath, wheezing or hoarseness
- repeated episodes of pneumonia or bronchitis
- swelling of the neck and face
- loss of appetite and/or weight loss
- fatigue
- clubbing of fingers

Having one of these symptoms does not mean that you have cancer, but if you notice one or more of them for more than two weeks, see your doctor.



As a lung cancer survivor, Fe Crawford has made a commitment to cancer prevention, which includes eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and trying to find time for physical activity.

Risk Factors

Many factors may influence the development of lung cancer, including:

- **smoking** This is by far the most important risk factor. Also at higher risk are individuals who smoke cigars and pipes.
- **family history** Research is beginning to show that a family history of lung cancer may be a risk factor.
- **personal history** A person with a previous lung cancer diagnosis is more likely to develop a second lung cancer.
- **occupational or environmental exposure** People who are routinely exposed to radon or asbestos are at increased risk for developing lung cancer — particularly if they are smokers.
- **radiation exposure** People who are routinely exposed to radiation from occupational, medical and environmental sources are at increased risk.
- **industrial exposure** People who are exposed to certain industrial substances like arsenic could be at high risk.
- **air pollution** The byproducts from the combustion of fossil fuels can put people at risk.
- **environmental tobacco smoke** People who live with or who are routinely around smokers are at higher risk.
- **lung diseases** People with lung diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) are at higher risk.

The Best of Lung Health

Screening

Cancer screening exams are medical tests performed when a person has no symptoms. Studies are still ongoing to determine the effectiveness of screening exams to find lung cancer early in people at average risk for lung cancer. X-rays and/or laboratory analysis of cells in phlegm and fiber optic screening are limited in detecting lung cancer before it spreads. Recent study results show that CT scans can detect cancer at an earlier stage in people at highest risk for the disease. However, these results do not support CT scan screening for the general population.

Reducing Your Risk

You can take action to reduce your risk of developing lung cancer. Making the healthy changes below does not mean you will not get lung cancer, but it may lower your chances.

- eliminate tobacco use
- use protective equipment when exposed to dangerous substances and pollutants
- avoid secondhand smoke

Take time to discuss your own risks with your health care provider who can best advise you on the screening exams and risk-reduction strategies that are right for you.



The location of James Williams' lung cancer was very uncommon. But thanks to successful treatment, James has been cancer-free for almost 10 years. His life is great again. He loves to play baseball with his grandson and always finds plenty of time to travel with his wife, JoAnn.



MD Anderson Resources

The Cancer Prevention Center can help you understand your risk of developing cancer through risk assessment and, when appropriate, genetic testing. The center offers personalized risk-reduction strategies, including healthy lifestyle recommendations and the use of medications to reduce cancer risk. Specialists perform risk-based cancer screening exams based on age, gender and cancer risk factors.

MD Anderson provides cancer care services at five convenient locations in the greater Houston area: Bay Area, Katy, Texas Medical Center, Sugar Land and The Woodlands.

For more information about MD Anderson programs or services, or to make an appointment, contact askMDAnderson at 1-877-632-6789 and ask for Carla, or visit www.mdanderson.org/ask.

Want to learn how you can prevent cancer?

Get a personalized action plan by completing MD Anderson's Cancer Risk Check at www.mdanderson.org/riskcheck.

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