

Lung Cancer Screening Shared Decision Making Tool

Annual lung screening with a low dose CT has been shown to save lives by finding lung cancer early, when treatment is most effective. If you have additional questions, please call our CT lung screening navigator at 434-654-4487.

What is the goal of low-dose CT lung screening?

The goal of CT lung screening is to save lives by detecting lung cancer at an early stage. Without CT lung screening lung cancer is usually not found until a person develops symptoms. At that time, the cancer is much harder to treat and the prognosis is worse.

Who should get a low-dose CT lung screening exam?

Medicare and the US Preventative Task Force recommend CT lung screening for high risk patients as defined below. Those who have symptoms of a lung condition at the time of screening, such as a new cough or shortness of breath, are not eligible.

- **Medicare:** 55-77 with 30 pack year smoking history and is a current smoker or has quit within the last 15 years
- **USPTF:** 55-80 with 30 pack year smoking history and is a current smoker or has quit within the last 15 years (Eligibility criteria may vary depending on your insurance plan. Please confirm with you insurance company and speak with our navigator. We have provided the link below to help guide you in the process.)

Lung Cancer Insurance Chart: [Sentara.com/ScreenMyLungs](https://www.sentara.com/ScreenMyLungs)

I am in one of the high-risk groups but have been diagnosed with cancer in the past. Is low-dose CT lung screening appropriate for me?

It depends. In some cases CT lung screening will not be appropriate, such as when your doctor is already following your cancer with CT scan studies. Your healthcare provider will help determine if CT lung screening is right for you.

I think I qualify for low-dose CT lung screening. What should I do next?

Discuss CT lung screening with your healthcare provider and see if the exam is right for you. Please note that you will need an order from your healthcare provider to receive a CT lung screening.

How effective is low-dose CT lung screening at preventing death from lung cancer?

Studies have shown that a CT lung screening can lower the risk of death from lung cancer by 20% in people who are at high risk.

What if I have symptoms?

Certain symptoms can be a sign that you have a condition in your lungs that should be evaluated and treated. These symptoms include fever, chest pain, a new or changing cough, shortness of breath that you have never felt before, coughing up blood or unexplained weight loss. If you have any of these symptoms please let your healthcare provider know as CT lung screening is not appropriate.

How is low-dose CT lung screening performed?

The CT lung screening exam takes about 15 minutes in total, with the actual scan lasting only 5 to 10 seconds. No medications are given, and no needles are used. You can eat before and after the exam. You do not need to change as long as the clothing on your chest does not contain metal. You must, however, be able to hold your breath for at least 6 seconds while the chest scan is being taken.

Are there any risks to low-dose CT lung screening?

There are several risks and limitations of CT lung screening. Your healthcare provider who ordered the screening may want to talk with you more about this.

- **Radiation exposure:** Low-dose CT lung screening uses radiation to create images of your lung. Radiation may increase your risk of cancer. By using special techniques, the amount of radiation in CT lung screening is small – about the same amount a person would receive from a screening mammogram. Further, your doctor has determined that the benefit of the screening outweighs the risks of being exposed to the small amount of radiation from this exam.
- **False negatives:** No test, including low-dose CT lung screening, is perfect. It is possible that you may have a medical condition, including lung cancer that is not found during your exam. This is called a false negative.
- **False positives / additional testing:** CT lung screening very often finds something in the lung that could be cancer but in fact is not. This is called a false positive. In order to make sure these findings are not cancer, you may need to have more tests. These tests will be performed only if you give us permission. Occasionally, patients need a procedure, such as a biopsy, that can have potential side effects.
- **Findings not related to lung cancer:** Your CT lung screening exam also captures images of areas of your body next to your lungs. In a small percentage of cases (5% – 10%) the CT scan will show a finding outside of the lung in areas such as your kidneys, adrenal glands, liver or thyroid which may require further evaluation. Your healthcare provider who ordered your exam can help determine what, if any, additional testing you may need.

Do I need to have a low-dose CT lung screening every year?

Yes. If you are in one of the previously described high risk groups and have determined with your healthcare provider that CT lung screening is appropriate, annual screenings are recommended within the age range set by Medicare or your insurance.

What can I expect from the results?

About 1 out of 10 CT lung screening exams will find something in the lung that may require additional imaging or evaluation. Most of the time these findings are lung nodules.

Lung nodules are very small collections of tissue in the lung. These nodules are very common, and the vast majority – more than 97% – are not cancer (benign). Most are normal lymph nodes or small areas of scarring from past infections.

Less commonly, lung nodules are cancer. If a small lung nodule is found to be cancer, the cancer can be cured more than 90% of the time.

To distinguish the large number of benign (non-cancerous) nodules from the few nodules that are in fact cancer, we may need to get more images before your next annual screening exam. If the nodule has suspicious features (for example, it is large, has an odd shape or grows over time), your ordering healthcare provider will refer you to a specialist for further testing.

When will I get my results?

Your report will go out to your healthcare provider within 1 week. Please contact them for your results. You may be contacted by the CT Lung Screening Navigator to ensure you have received and understand your results.

Where can I find help to quit smoking?

The best way to prevent lung cancer is to stop smoking. For help on quitting smoking, please call our CT Lung Screening Navigator at 434-654-4487.



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