



Focus on  
Your Lungs

A Screening You Don't Want to Miss



## Debunking Myths about Lung Cancer Screening

Use this resource to help learn facts about lung cancer screenings using a low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) scan, as we expose common misconceptions about these potentially lifesaving tests.

### MYTH

You must have symptoms to qualify for a lung cancer screening.

### FACT

Having symptoms (such as, a new cough that lasts more than three weeks or a cough that gets worse) is not a requirement to qualify for a lung cancer screening.

Recently updated screening guidelines by the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) aim to increase lung cancer screenings to help more people detect lung cancer earlier, which, in some cases, can happen before any symptoms are present.

### MYTH

Only active smokers need to be screened for lung cancer.

### FACT

People who currently smoke or have smoked in the last 15 years may qualify for a lung cancer screening.

The greatest risk for lung cancer is a history of smoking. Adults between ages 50 and 80 should be screened every year if they currently smoke or quit within the past 15 years, and have at least a 20 pack-year smoking history\*.

\*A pack-year equals the number of packs of cigarettes a person smoked per day, multiplied by the number of years they have smoked. For example, a person with 20 pack-years could have smoked 1 pack a day for 20 years, or 2 packs a day for 10 years, or half a pack a day for 40 years, etc.

### MYTH

Lung cancer screenings are painful and invasive.

### FACT

Lung cancer screenings only take a few minutes, are not painful and do not involve any needles.

During a low-dose CT (computed tomography) scan, you lie on a table and an X-ray machine takes pictures of your lungs. It provides quality images of your lungs using 90% less ionizing radiation than a standard CT scan of your chest. The entire scan takes less than ten minutes. After your scan, your doctor will contact you with the results and talk about any next steps.

## MYTH

If you currently do not meet the criteria for a lung cancer screening, you will never need one.

## FACT

Your risk for lung cancer may change over time, for example, the longer you smoke, the greater your risk. So, even if you're not eligible for screening now, you may be eligible in the future.

Other things that increase your risk for lung cancer include a family history of lung cancer or exposure to certain materials in the environment, such as radon gas, asbestos, secondhand smoke and other materials that may cause cancer like arsenic, chromium and nickel. You may be eligible for screening at a later date, so it's important you talk your doctor about screening during your annual health checks.

## MYTH

Lung cancer screening is not covered by insurance.

## FACT

Many insurance plans cover lung cancer screenings for those who qualify, and there are options if you don't have insurance.

Check with your insurance company to understand if LDCT scans are covered as part of your plan. Other important items to check with your insurance provider is if there are any costs associated with screening and if screening must be done at specific "in-network" facilities. If you don't have insurance, some community health centers offer free lung cancer screenings. Ask your doctor for help locating a center or find a center near you by using this [screening center locator](#) from our partner.

For more information about lung cancer screening coverage and questions to ask your provider, please see our Insurance Coverage Guide.



**Yearly screening for people at high risk for lung cancer can help save lives by finding lung cancer earlier, before it has spread.**

Learn more about the risk factors and take our quiz to see if you may qualify for a lung cancer screening.