Love *your* Lungs

LUNG CANCER SCREENING INFORMATION SHEET: YOUR FIRST VISIT

This information sheet will guide you through your first screening visit. Please speak with your screening navigator at the Ontario Lung Screening Program site hospital if you have any questions or concerns.

Ontario Health
Cancer Care Ontario

Why organized lung cancer screening is important for people at high risk of getting lung cancer

Cancer screening is testing done on people who are at risk of getting cancer, but who generally feel fine. Regular screening is important because it can find lung cancer early, when treatment has a better chance of working.

People who are 55 to 74 years old and have smoked a lot of cigarettes for many years may be at high risk of getting lung cancer and may benefit from getting screened.

Why you qualify for lung cancer screening

You qualify to participate in lung cancer screening based on your risk score. The screening navigator figured out your risk score after you answered questions about your smoking and health history.

Your risk score for lung cancer

This risk score tells you your chance of getting lung cancer in the next 6 years. For example, if your risk score is 10, your chance of getting lung cancer in the next 6 years is 10 percent. People with a two percent or greater risk of developing lung cancer over the next six years are considered eligible to participate in the Ontario Lung Screening Program (OLSP).

How to get screened for lung cancer

People who are at high risk of getting lung cancer and qualify to get screened will be offered a special type of computed tomography (CT) scan that uses a small amount of radiation. This test is called a "low-dose CT scan."

During a low-dose CT scan, you lie on an open table that passes through a large donut-shaped machine, called a "scanner." The scanner uses a small amount of radiation to take detailed pictures of your lungs. The test only takes a few minutes and is not painful. There are no medications or needles given during the test.

Low-dose CT results

- The low-dose CT scan looks for lung nodules, which are spots on someone's lungs, but cannot tell whether they are actually cancer. More testing is needed to figure out whether a nodule is cancer.
- The doctor who looks at your low-dose CT scan will give it a score based on the size of the nodule and what it looks like. Then the doctor will figure out what your next step should be, including when you should have your next scan or whether you should be sent for more tests. We will call you with your result (scan score) within 2 weeks of your scan date.
- Your low-dose CT scan also takes pictures of body parts near your lungs, such as your heart, bones, kidneys, liver and thyroid. If your low-dose CT scan shows something unusual in these other body parts, your results may be sent to your health care provider (for example, your doctor or nurse practitioner). Your health care provider will decide whether you need more tests based on these other results.
- You can see what all the scan scores mean and next steps in the table to the right.

1	Your scan did not show any nodules or nodules that need follow-up.	Your next scan will be in 12 months.
2	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules with a **very low** chance of being or becoming cancer.	Your next scan will be in 12 months.
3	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules with a **low** chance of being or becoming cancer.	Your next scan will be in 6 months to check whether any nodules have changed.
4A	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that **might** have a chance of being or becoming cancer.	Your next scan will be in 3 months to check whether any nodules have changed.
4B	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that need more testing.	You will be sent for more testing.
	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that were not on your last scan and might need more testing.	Your next scan will be in 1 month to check whether any nodules have changed.
4X	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that need more testing.	You will be sent for more testing.

Your results

If your next step is another low-dose CT scan:

It is important to come back for your next scheduled scan. Screening works best if you get tested regularly.

If your next step is being sent for more testing:

You need more tests to find out whether you have lung cancer. You will be contacted by a member of the lung diagnostic assessment team to talk about your next steps.

Being sent for more tests does not mean you have lung cancer. But if you are diagnosed with lung cancer, the lung diagnostic assessment team will talk to you about your treatment options and help you decide what is best for you.

"In the past, there wasn't a lot that could be done to cure a person with lung cancer because it was often found at a later stage. Now there is a test to find lung cancer early when treatment has a better chance of working."

Dr. Gail Darling, Leading Lung Surgeon, Toronto General Hospital

Screening with low-dose CT

If you are at high risk of getting lung cancer, getting screened with a low-dose CT scan is the best way to find lung cancer early, when treatment has a better chance of working. However, screening tests are not perfect and can have risks, so it is important to understand these risks before deciding to get screened.

Screening is not perfect

- Low-dose CT scans may cause false alarms. Some low-dose CT scans will show a nodule that needs a follow-up test. Usually this follow-up test is another low-dose CT scan after a period of time. Most people who have more tests will not have cancer.
- Depending on someone's test results, they may need to have a lung biopsy (where a very small piece of the lung is removed) or surgery. The possible side effects of the lung biopsy are bleeding, infection or a collapsed lung. However, not many people who get screened for lung cancer go on to have lung biopsies, and when they do, these biopsies do not usually cause problems.
- Lung cancer screening may find a cancer that is growing very slowly and would never make you sick or cause you any harm. Unfortunately, it is usually not possible to tell which cancers are more harmful.
- Low-dose CT scans give off a small amount of radiation. Although the amount of radiation is low, there is a small chance that the extra radiation from many low-dose CT scans over time could cause cancer. For people who are at high risk of getting lung cancer, the benefits of finding cancer early are probably greater than the risks of getting a small amount of radiation from the test. The amount of radiation you get through a low-dose CT scan for lung cancer screening is a lot more than a chest X-ray, much less than a regular chest CT scan and about the same as 1 year of natural background radiation (radiation from the sky and the ground, and through breathing, eating and drinking).
- It is possible that you may have lung cancer that is not found during your screening scans or that lung cancer may grow in the time between scans.
- Not all of the cancers found by low-dose CT will be caught early enough. Screening may not make your health better or help you live longer if it finds a cancer that has already spread to other parts of the body or a type of cancer that treatment may not work as well for.

People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk of getting disease, including cancer, and dying early. Take advantage of our services to help you quit smoking.

Need this information in an accessible format?
1-877-280-8538, TTY 1-800-855-0511, info@ontariohealth.ca
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To find out more about lung cancer screening services, contact your screening navigator at the OLSP site hospital