

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women —213,380 people were estimated to be diagnosed and 160,390 people were estimated to die of lung cancer in 2007. Lung cancer accounts for about 15 percent of all new cancer diagnoses, but 29 percent of all cancer deaths. Men have a 1 in 12 chance of developing lung cancer, and for women, it is 1 in 16. More people die of lung cancer than of colon, breast, and prostate cancers combined. However, death rates are declining for both men and women. Tobacco use is the most important risk factor for lung cancer.

PREVENTION

- Don't use tobacco in any form.
- If you smoke or use tobacco, quit.
- Create smoke-free environments in your community.

RISK

- People who use tobacco in any form
- People who have had exposure to substances such as arsenic, radon and asbestos
- People whose occupation exposes them to radiation
- People exposed to second-hand smoke
- All people exposed to air pollution and environmental smoke

SYMPTOMS

In the early stages, there may be no symptoms. Later these signs may appear:

- Persistent cough
- Sputum (spit) streaked with blood
- Chest pain
- Recurring pneumonia or bronchitis

EARLY DETECTION

There are very few methods available to detect lung cancer early. Today, these tests help diagnose the disease and offer doctors a first look at the cancer's extent:

- Chest X-ray, analysis of cells in sputum and examination of the bronchia.
- Newer tests, such as the low-dose spiral CT scan, may soon help detect early lung cancer in people at high risk.

TREATMENT

Once diagnosed, treatment is determined by the type of lung cancer, either small cell or non-small cell.

- Surgery is usually the treatment of localized disease.
- Radiation and chemotherapy are sometimes used in combination with surgery for later stages.