



## Lung Cancer – It is about Not Smoking

In the United States, about 90% of lung cancer deaths in men and almost 80% of lung cancer deaths in women are due to smoking. People who smoke are 10 to 20 times more likely to get lung cancer or die from lung cancer than people who do not smoke. The longer a person smokes and the more cigarettes smoked each day, the higher the risk is.

Smoke from other people's cigarettes ("secondhand" smoke) causes lung cancer as well. The 2006 Surgeon General's Report, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke*, concludes there is no safe level of secondhand smoke for nonsmokers.

### Other Things That May Cause Cancer at Home and Work

Radon gas causes lung cancer and is sometimes found in people's homes. Radon is an odorless, colorless gas that comes from rocks and dirt and can get trapped in houses and buildings. Examples of substances found at some workplaces that increase risk include asbestos, arsenic, and some forms of silica and chromium. For many of these substances, the risk of getting lung cancer is even higher for those who also smoke.

### Family History

The risk of lung cancer may be higher if a person's parents, siblings (brother or sister), or children have had lung cancer.

### Reduce Your Risk

- **Don't Smoke**  
The most important thing you can do to prevent lung cancer is to not start smoking or to quit if you currently smoke. Free "quit smoking" support is available by telephone to smokers anywhere in the United States. The toll-free number is 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669).
- **Avoid Secondhand Smoke**  
CDC's Office of Smoking and Health has information about secondhand smoke.
- **Make Your Home and Workplace Safer**  
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that all homes be tested for radon. EPA's radon web site has information about radon and radon testing. Health and safety guidelines in the workplace can help workers avoid things that can cause cancer.



## **Economical Factors**

“Smoking is the most lethal legal activity in our society,” says Dr. James Mulshine, a professor of internal medicine and associate provost for research at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center.

The figures should worry us, especially those smoking. In fact, recent studies have shown that the death rate for men fell from 90.6 deaths per 100,000 people in 1990 to 69.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2005, which seems encouraging, according to Dr. Michael Thun, vice president of epidemiology and surveillance research for the American Cancer Society.

“Lung cancer rates have been falling in men since 1991 since men began to quit smoking. They have leveled off in women, but are not declining. Women started smoking later than men in our society and are having more trouble quitting,” Thun says.

However, it seems that stress caused by a slowing economy, shrinking retirement accounts and rising unemployment rates appear to increase the number of cigarettes per day for people smoking already and delay quitting in those trying, according to the American Legacy Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-based anti-smoking advocacy group. An online poll involving 2,375 Americans 18 years old and older showed that women smokers were more likely to smoke due to worries about economy, with 31 percent reporting they did, compared to 17 percent of men.

## **The Three Leading Causes of Lung Cancer**

### **Smoking**

According to the American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp>, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in American men and women today.

Smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer. It is estimated that 87% of lung cancer deaths are caused by smoking. As soon as you quit, your body reaps the benefits of being tobacco free. Quitting smoking is the BEST defense against lung cancer as your body will begin to heal within hours.

[http://www.seniorsapprove.com/stop\\_smoking.html#heals](http://www.seniorsapprove.com/stop_smoking.html#heals)



## **Radon Gas**

EPA estimates that about 20,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the U.S. are radon-related. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. Radon is an odorless, tasteless and invisible gas produced by the decay of naturally occurring uranium in soil and water. Radon is a form of ionizing radiation and a proven carcinogen. Lung cancer is the only known effect on human health from exposure to radon in air.

<http://www.epa.gov/radon/healthrisks.html>

## **Second Hand Smoke**

The current Surgeon General's Report concluded that scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk-free level of exposure to second hand smoke. Short exposures to second hand smoke can cause blood platelets to become stickier, damage the lining of blood vessels, decrease coronary flow velocity reserves, and reduce heart rate variability, potentially increasing the risk of heart attack.

<http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=35422>

What you can do:

### **Stop Smoking**

### **Risk Factors**

- Tobacco smoking is the leading risk factor for lung cancer.
- Tobacco use accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths and 97% of lung cancer deaths.
- Nonsmokers who breathe second-hand smoke have an increased risk of developing lung cancer. Each year, about 3,000 non-smoking adults in the U.S. die of lung cancer as a result of breathing secondhand smoke.
- Other factors that increase an individual's risk of developing lung cancer include:
  - Increasing age



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- A personal history of lung cancer
- Hookah (water pipe) smoking
- Radiation treatment to the chest
- Air pollution
- History of tuberculosis
- Exposure to asbestos, radon, or other specific cancer-causing agents in the workplace or environment

### **Common Signs and Symptoms of Lung Cancer**

Although most lung cancers do not cause symptoms until they have spread, you should report any of the following to your doctor right away. Often these problems are caused by something other than cancer. But if lung cancer is found, prompt treatment could extend your life and relieve your symptoms.

- A cough that does not go away
- Chest pain, often made worse by deep breathing
- Hoarseness
- Weight loss and loss of appetite
- Blood or rust-colored sputum (spit or phlegm)
- Shortness of breath
- Recurring infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia
- New onset of wheezing