

# The Facts about Lung Cancer



## Lung Cancer Center

SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL

- ◆ Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer among men and women in the United States, causing an estimated 164,000 deaths annually.
- ◆ Lung cancer occurs most often in people over age 50 who are or who have been heavy smokers.
- ◆ Cigarette smoking is responsible for 87 percent of lung cancer cases in the United States.
- ◆ Smoking two or more packs of cigarettes a day increases your chance of getting lung cancer by as much as 25 percent.
- ◆ On-the-job exposure to carcinogens, air pollution and family history are also factors in determining your risk of getting lung cancer.
- ◆ Surgery, radiation and chemotherapy are among the treatments used alone or in combination to treat lung cancer.
- ◆ Most people diagnosed with lung cancer are not current smokers, but rather ex-smokers (some of whom quit a decade or more ago).
- ◆ Each year, approximately 26,000 Americans who never smoked learn that they have lung cancer.
- ◆ A common symptom associated with lung cancer is coughing up blood, but it usually does not occur until the later stages. The first signs are more subtle: fatigue and shortness of breath.
- ◆ Proper treatment at any stage can extend life, improve comfort or even cure the disease. No patient should believe “nothing can be done.”
- ◆ New X-ray technology called CT scanning has shown promise in finding early lung cancer in smokers and former smokers. It is not yet known if this test will lower the chances of dying from lung cancer.
- ◆ Standard detection methods are available, such as chest X-rays and sputum (spit) tests, which screen for lung cancer cells, but studies show that they do not find many lung cancers early enough to improve a person’s chance for a cure.
- ◆ The single best way to reduce your risk of getting lung cancer is to eliminate the use of tobacco products. Avoiding second-hand smoke and eating a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables may also help prevent lung cancer.

*For more information about the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of lung cancers, or to schedule an appointment, contact the Lung Cancer Center at Saint Vincent Hospital at 508-363-5035.*



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