

Living Well / Aging Well

Lung Cancer Screening



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

What is lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer begins in the lungs and may spread to lymph nodes or other organs in the body, such as the brain. Cancer from other organs also may spread to the lungs. Your doctor will recommend a screening test to find the disease early. Finding the disease early increases the success rate of treatment.



Lung cancer screening can only be done using low-dose computed tomography (also called a low-dose CT scan, or LDCT). During an LDCT scan, an X-ray machine is used to make a detailed scan of your lungs using a low dose amount of radiation as you lie on a table. The amount of radiation used in the screening LDCT is equivalent to what the average American will be exposed to over 3-6 months. The detailed images of your lungs made from the scan will help your doctor see cancer earlier than other methods.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/lung/basic_info/screening.htm

Who should be screened for lung cancer?

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends yearly lung cancer screening with LDCT for people who are aged 50 and 80 years old where the following apply:

- Have a 20 pack-year or more smoking history, and
- Smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years.

(A pack-year is smoking an average of one pack of cigarettes per day for one year. For example, a person could have a 20 pack-year history by smoking one pack a day for 20 years or by smoking two packs a day for 10 years.)

Source:

https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/lung/basic_info/screening.htm



What are the signs of lung cancer?

Not everyone has the same signs for lung cancer. Signs can be related to the lungs or other parts of the body if the lung cancer has spread. Most people don't have signs until the lung cancer is advanced. Lung cancer symptoms may include:

- A cough that gets worse or does not go away.
- Chest pain.
- Shortness of breath.
- Wheezing.
- Coughing up blood.
- Feeling very tired all the time.
- Weight loss with no known cause.

Other illnesses related to lung cancer may include recurring attacks of pneumonia and swollen or enlarged glands between the lungs. These symptoms can happen with other illnesses that are not cancer, so please discuss them with your doctor.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/lung/basic_info/symptoms.htm