



Learn All About Lung Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment

Description

Lung cancer often spreads to the other parts of the body, such as the brain and bones, that cause pain, headache, nausea, and other severe symptoms.



Once lung cancer spreads beyond the lungs to other organs of the body, it becomes difficult to cure. In-time diagnosis and treatment can increase the survival rate up to 90%. In this article, we will learn how your doctor diagnoses lung cancer and what treatments are available depending upon the specific type and stage of the lung cancer.

How to Test, Detect and Diagnose Lung Cancer

Some early symptoms make your doctor suspect that you have lung cancer. One should be cautious

about these early signs like;

- Chest pain while coughing and laughing
- Coughing up blood or rust color phlegm
- Swollen lymph node above your collarbone
- Droopy eyelids and uneven pupils
- Swollen face
- An unusual build-up in your abdomen
- One arm not working properly

The fact is these early symptoms are not an obvious indication of lung cancer. You cannot detect lung cancer on your own unless you go through some tests, physical examinations, and scans under the supervision of your doctor.

Tests Recommended for Lung Cancer

The first two tests that your doctor may suggest are checking the **calcium level** in your blood and **chest X-ray** for any fluid or tumor. Your doctor suspects lung cancer if

- Calcium level is higher than the average level without any apparent reason
- Lung tumor may appear as a white-grey mass on X-ray

Saliva, mucus, and Chest X rays cannot detect lung tumors. However, if there is fluid present between the chest tissues lining and lungs, it may be the reason for poor breathing. **Thoracentesis** procedure removes this fluid with the help of a needle. The removing of fluid improves breathing significantly. This fluid is also helpful in diagnosing possible lung cancer as well.

If a fluid test shows a negative result for cancer, then video-assisted **thoracoscopic surgery** is conducted to examine the lung lining to confirm any tumor present. If a tumor appears, then further tests are needed to diagnose the type of cancer.

However, Non-small Lung Cancer is confirmed with **a biopsy**. In this procedure, your doctor needs a sample of lung tissues to diagnose lung cancer. A needle passes through a patient nose, mouth, and air passage to the lungs and removes some tissue from the lungs. This procedure is usually not painful.

If a biopsy detects a lung tumor, then the following procedure is to check the category of cancer and what organs are affected by it.

The next step is to do a **CT scan** for a detailed checkup of your lungs to see how much cancer has spread. Cancer spreads to nearby organs like distant bones, the liver, adrenal glands, or the brain.

Mediastinoscopy is the procedure in which cancer cells are detected in lymph nodes because biopsy is a valuable test only to determine the lung tumor near the center of the lungs.

To check the spread of lung cancer to distant organs, CT scans, bone scans, and MRI of the brain are helpful for doctors.

How is Lung Cancer treated?

Your doctor examines all tests and devises a plan to treat lung cancer based on the type of cancer, the level of cancer spread, your overall health, and the current functionality of your lungs.

There are four steps to cure lung cancer

1. Surgery (non-smokers) or Stereotactic radiosurgery (smokers)
2. Radiation
3. Chemotherapy
4. Medication

Non-small Lung Cancer and Small-cell Lung Cancer Treatment

Small Cell lung cancer often starts in the airways of smokers, and it can quickly spread to the other organs of the body. Chemotherapy, along with radiotherapy of the brain, is involved in the treatment of small-cell lung cancer.

Non-small-cell lung cancer usually diagnosed in the form of a tumor develops over the years and is diagnosed at stage 1 or stage 2 when some symptoms appear. It can be treated with surgery that removes cancer along with lung tissues and lymph nodes. After surgery, you need to stay in hospital for some days until wounds heal.

After a month, your doctor calls you to check remaining cancer cells and kill those cells with radiotherapy in combination with chemotherapy.

Surgery is not suitable for some patients especially smokers that have heart problem along with lung cancer. Stereotactic radiosurgery and radiofrequency ablation along with chemotherapy are used to treat lung cancer in these patients.

To control the growth factor receptor (afatinib (Gilotrif), amivantamab-vmiw (Rybrevant), dacomitinib (Vizimpro), erlotinib (Tarceva), necitumumab (Portrazza) and osimertinib (Tagrisso) are used.

To block the blood supply to the tumor, bevacizumab (Avastin) and ramucirumab (Cyramza) show significant improvement in cancer patients.

It is also necessary to boost the immunity of patients, with the help of *Atezolizumab (Tecentriq)*, *durvalumab (Imfinzi)*, *nivolumab (Opdivo)*, and *pembrolizumab (Keytruda)* medicines every 2 – 3 weeks that fight cancer cells as well.

Metastatic lung cancer

Metastasized is cancer that spreads to other organs of the body. It isn't easy to cure. However, radiotherapy or chemotherapy and some medicines like Gefitinib (Iressa) are used to provide comfort, lessen pain, and prolong life. These treatments shrink the size of the tumor and relieve pain.

Gene rearrangement determines the sequences in which the genes are joined as the DNA of the immunoglobulin-producing cell matures. Your doctor may prescribe medicines like alectinib (Alecensa),

brigatinib (Alunbrig), ceritinib (Zykadia), crizotinib (Xalkori), and lorlatinib (Lorbrena) to treat some proteins in tumors that have changed in the BRAF gene.

Care after Treatment

These treatments may have side effects, such as constipation, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, or pain. Palliative care is used to treat the after-effects of surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and medication. Your doctors may use supportive medicines to relieve these symptoms.

Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke are the two leading causes of lung cancer. A person can live five years on average after diagnosis of lung cancer. The key to increasing the survival rate is to catch cancer in its early stages.

Category

1. Lifestyle

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