

Cancer Advances: Study Finds That Patients Who Quit Smoking During Lung Cancer Treatment Live Longer

From the April 15, 2003 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* [Read the Study](#) [1] For many years, researchers have known that patients who quit smoking after finishing treatment for lung cancer are less likely to experience a recurrence of the disease. Less clear, however, is the effect that smoking during treatment has on patient survival. To answer this question, researchers, led by Dr. Gregory M.M. Videtic of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation's Radiation Oncology Department, looked at a group of lung cancer patients over ten years, comparing survival rates of those who continued to smoke during treatment and those who did not. Using medical records, they identified 186 patients who underwent standard chemotherapy with radiotherapy and provided information on their smoking habits during treatment. All of these patients were former smokers, and 58% stopped smoking prior to treatment. Researchers found that the patients who stopped smoking lived longer, on average, than those who continued to smoke. Researchers had suspected that the reason for the decrease in survival rate among smokers occurred from interruptions during treatment in the smoking group caused by side effects of the chemotherapy combined with continued smoking. Instead, they found that patients who smoked did not have more interruptions than patients who did not smoke. This suggests that continued smoking during treatment interferes with how treatments work or how cancer cells respond. **What Does This Mean For Patients?** This study shows that it is never too late to stop smoking. Lung cancer patients who smoke and are undergoing or preparing to undergo chemotherapy should seriously consider stopping smoking during treatment. They should discuss potential methods to quit smoking and the benefits of doing so with their physician.

Links:

[1] <http://www.jco.org/cgi/content/abstract/21/8/1544>