

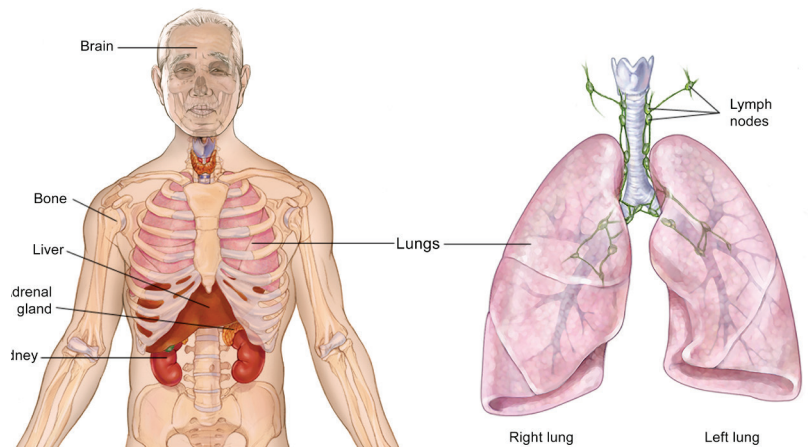
Lung Cancer

■ What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer begins with uncontrolled growth of cancer cells in the lung and the formation of a mass called a tumor, lesion, or nodule. There are 2 major types of lung cancer: non-small cell and small cell. They are usually treated in different ways. Worldwide, lung cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer.

■ What is the function of the lungs?

The lungs are made up of 5 lobes, 3 in the right lung and 2 in the left lung. As a person inhales, the lungs absorb oxygen from the air, which is delivered to the rest of the body through the bloodstream. When the body uses the oxygen, carbon dioxide is created. It is carried back to the lungs through the bloodstream and released when a person exhales.



■ What does stage mean?

The stage is a way of describing where the cancer is located, if or where it has spread, and whether it is affecting other parts of the body. There are 4 stages for lung cancer: stages I through IV (1 through 4). Small cell lung cancer is primarily classified as either limited stage or extensive stage depending on where it is located and has spread. Find more descriptions and illustrations of these stages at www.cancer.net/nscl and www.cancer.net/scl.

■ How is lung cancer treated?

The treatment options for lung cancer depend on the size and location of the tumor, the type of lung cancer, whether the cancer has spread, and the person's overall health. The main options for treating lung cancer are surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy. Non-small cell lung cancer is often treated with a combination of these treatments. Small cell lung cancer is often treated with chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy, and immunotherapy may be recommended, too. When making treatment decisions, people may also consider a clinical trial. Clinical trials are an option to consider for treatment and care for all stages of cancer. Talk with your doctor about all treatment options. The side effects of lung cancer treatment can often be prevented or managed with the help of your health care team. This is called palliative or supportive care and is an important part of the overall treatment plan.

■ How can I cope with lung cancer?

Absorbing the news of a cancer diagnosis and communicating with your doctor are key parts of the coping process. Seeking support, organizing your health information, making sure all of your questions are answered, and participating in the decision-making process are other steps. Talk with your health care team about any concerns. Understanding your emotions and those of people close to you can be helpful in managing the diagnosis, treatment, and healing process. Because lung cancer is often associated with smoking, patients may feel that they will not receive as much support or help from the people around them. However, lung cancer can affect anyone. Although a lung cancer diagnosis is serious, patients can be hopeful that their doctors can offer them effective treatment.

ASCO ANSWERS is a collection of oncologist-approved patient education materials developed by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for people with cancer and their caregivers.

Questions to ask the health care team

Regular communication is important in making informed decisions about your health care. It can be helpful to bring someone along to your appointments to take notes. Consider asking your health care team the following questions:

- ▶ What type of lung cancer do I have?
- ▶ Can you explain my pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- ▶ What stage is the lung cancer? What does this mean?
- ▶ Will my cancer be tested for biomarkers?
- ▶ Would you explain my treatment options?
- ▶ What clinical trials are available for me? Where are they located, and how can I find out more about them?
- ▶ What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- ▶ What is the goal of each treatment? Is it to eliminate the cancer, help me feel better, or both?
- ▶ Who will be part of my treatment team, and what does each member do?
- ▶ Besides treating my cancer, what can be done to manage my symptoms?
- ▶ How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?
- ▶ Could this treatment affect my sex life? If so, how and for how long?
- ▶ Will this treatment affect my ability to become pregnant or have children?
- ▶ What long-term side effects may be associated with my cancer treatment?
- ▶ If I'm worried about managing the costs of cancer care, who can help me?
- ▶ Where can I find emotional support for me and my family?
- ▶ If I have a question or problem, who should I call?

Find more questions to ask the health care team at www.cancer.net/nsclc and www.cancer.net/sclc. For a digital list of questions, download Cancer.Net's free

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Words to know

Benign: A tumor that can grow but will not spread.

Biopsy: Removal of a tissue sample that is then examined under a microscope to check for cancer cells.

Bronchoscopy: A procedure using a thin, flexible tube with a light on the end to examine the inside of the lungs and/or take a sample of fluid or tissue.

Chemotherapy: The use of drugs to destroy cancer cells.

Immunotherapy: A type of cancer treatment designed to boost the body's natural defenses to fight cancer.

Malignant: A tumor that can grow and spread to other parts of the body.

Metastasis: The spread of cancer from where it began to another part of the body.

Oncologist: A doctor who specializes in treating cancer.

Prognosis: Chance of recovery.

Radiation therapy: The use of high-energy x-rays to destroy cancer cells.

Targeted therapy: Treatment that targets specific genes or proteins that contribute to cancer growth and survival.

Thoracotomy: Removal of a lung tumor through a cut in the chest.

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