

# Finding Lung Cancer Early

There is a test that can help find lung cancer before it causes any symptoms. It is called a low-dose CAT scan (LDCT) and it can help find lung cancer when it's small, hasn't spread, and might be easier to treat. This can help lower a person's risk of dying from lung cancer.



## Should I get screened for lung cancer?

The American Cancer Society urges people with a higher risk for lung cancer to get screened once a year. This includes people who:

- Are between 50 and 80 years old
- Smoke or used to smoke
- Have at least a 20 pack-year smoking history

A pack-year means that a person smoked 1 pack (or about 20 cigarettes) each day for a year. This could mean:

- Smoking 1 pack a day for 20 years, or
- Smoking 2 packs a day for 10 years

Talk to someone on your health care team if you think you might be at higher risk for lung cancer. They can help you decide if you should be screened.



## How is lung cancer screening done?

An LDCT scan is the test used to screen for lung cancer. It's like an x-ray but shows more detail. An LDCT scan can help find changes in your lungs that might be cancer.

The CAT scanner is a big, ring-shaped machine. You lie on a flat table that slides back and forth inside the hole in the middle of the scanner. You'll be asked to hold your breath for a short time. You'll hear buzzing and clicking as the scanner turns on and off. The scan doesn't hurt and only takes a few minutes once you're in the machine.

You may be asked to undress and put on a gown. You'll need to take off any clothing or objects with metal, such as zippers, underwire bras, jewelry, or piercings. Also, let the technologist know if you have a pacemaker or other medical devices in your body.



## What do screening results mean?

A radiologist (a doctor who is trained to read LDCT scans) will look at your scan and send the results to your doctor. You might need to have more tests if changes are seen. It is very common for LDCT scans to show small areas called nodules. Many of these nodules aren't cancer. But it is important to find out if the scan shows anything that might need to be treated.



## Will my insurance pay for lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer screening is covered by Medicare and many private health insurance plans. Your doctor's office can help you find out if your insurance will pay for the scan.



## What can I do to help lower my risk for lung cancer?

If you smoke, quit. Getting screened for lung cancer does not replace quitting smoking. The American Cancer Society has tips and resources to help improve your chances of quitting for good. Visit our website at [cancer.org/quittobacco](https://cancer.org/quittobacco) or call us at **1-800-227-2345**.

Visit [cancer.org/healthy/find-cancer-early](https://cancer.org/healthy/find-cancer-early) to learn more about lung cancer screening.