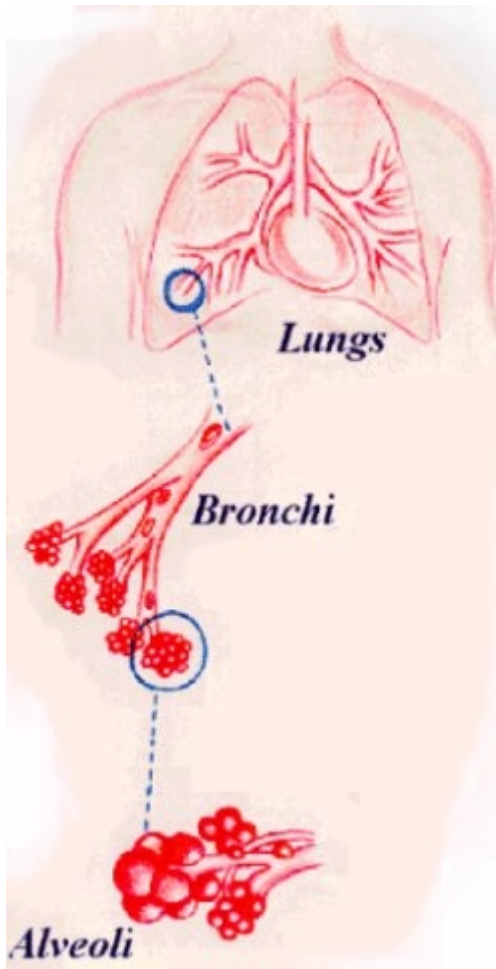


Women's Cancer Information Project

Coordinated by the European Institute of Women's Health

Lung Cancer

The Lungs



The lungs are a pair of cone-shaped organs that are situated inside the chest. The lungs bring oxygen into the body and take out carbon dioxide, which is a waste product of the cells of the body. Tubes called bronchi make up the inside of the lungs. Your lungs have an extensive network of blood and lymph vessels. Cancer cells may grow into these vessels and be carried by the blood or lymph and be deposited elsewhere in the body. Cancer can spread from the lungs to almost any site in the body. Most commonly it spreads to the brain, bone, bone marrow and liver. Lung cancer takes many years to develop. It is the second most common cancer in women.

There are two basic types of lung cancer – small cell and non-small cell cancer. These different types grow and spread in different ways. Small cell lung cancer is a disease in which cancer cells are found in the tissues of the lungs. It is usually found in people who smoke or who used to smoke cigarettes. The non-small cell type of lung cancer is a common disease and is usually associated with people who used to smoke, [passive smoking](#) and radon (a radioactive gas) exposure.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

These can include: - **hoarseness – persistent cough – blood in your phlegm – shortness of breath - chest pain – loss of appetite – difficulty in swallowing – weakness – paleness – high temperature – joint swelling – bone pain or tenderness – weight loss** Smoking causes about 85% of lung cancer cases. Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 different chemicals, many of which are proven carcinogens (materials that are known to cause cancer). Lung cancer occurs most in people over 50 who have a long history of cigarette smoking.

RISK FACTORS

- The risk of lung cancer increases, the more cigarettes smoked per day.
- Also, the earlier the age at which smoking began, the greater the risk of lung cancer.

- Passive smoking is also known to increase the risk.
- In rare cases, exposure to certain industrial substances, such as arsenic, certain organic chemicals and asbestos.
- Radiation exposure from occupational, medical and environmental sources.

EXAMINATIONS

If the patient has a persistent cough that produces phlegm, the phlegm will be examined for cancer cells. The doctor may order a chest X-ray or a specialised X-ray such as the CAT scan, which helps to locate any abnormal spots in the lungs. A bronchoscopy may be performed. A bronchoscope is a small tube inserted through the nose or mouth, down the throat, into the bronchial tubes. During this examination, the doctor may also obtain a biopsy or other sample of lung tissue to test for cancer cells. Pressure is felt during the examination but very seldom pain.

TREATMENT

[Surgery](#) may cure lung cancer. It is used in early stages of the disease. [Radiation](#) therapy can also be used. This is used in a combination with chemotherapy and sometimes with surgery to offer relief from pain. [Chemotherapy](#) may be used: in a combination with chemotherapy and sometimes with surgery to offer relief from pain.

- along with surgery.
- in more advanced stages of the cancer.
- in all the stages of small cell cancer.

PREVENTION :

STOP SMOKING

1. Try to avoid second-hand smoke/passive smoking.
 2. Ask questions about your work environment if you are exposed to industrial dusts and fumes, as it can be very dangerous.
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