

Shared Decision Making

Discussion Guideline

Please talk to your health care provider to learn more about your risk and John Muir Health lung cancer screening programs.

Here Are Frequently Asked Questions and Answers that can serve as a starting point for that discussion. We've also included some general information you may want to know:

What is Lung Cancer LDCT screening?

Lung cancer screening uses low dose CT, i.e. a CT scan using the lowest dose of radiation for each individual to find lung nodules, some of which may be cancer.

Why should high-risk patients get a screening CT?

Studies have shown that when compared to single-view chest X-ray screening, LDCT lung screening in a high-risk population, can lower the risk of death from lung cancer by 20 percent.

Contact your doctor immediately if you have any of these potential symptoms of lung cancer.

- A cough that doesn't go away or a change in a cough
- Chest pain that is often worse with deep breathing, coughing, or laughing
- Hoarseness
- Weight loss and loss of appetite
- Coughing up blood or rust- colored sputum
- Shortness of breath or becoming easily winded
- Feeling tired or weak

Who is a high-risk patient?

CMS screening criteria and commercial payers consider the following high-risk:

Men or women between the ages of 55 to 77 years old who are:

- Current or former smoker with at least a 30 pack year smoking history (1 pack of cigarettes a day for 1 year = 1 pack year history)
- If you are a former smoker you must have quit within the last 15 years. If you meet the above criteria, you also qualify to participate in the International - Early Lung Cancer Action Program (I-ELCAP. Please see below for more information.)
- No symptoms of lung cancer



What are the alternatives if I have a smoking history, but do not meet the CMS requirements?

Medicare and commercial payers have only approved lung cancer screening coverage based on research studies with a very specific group of high-risk patients (see high-risk eligibility above). If you do not meet the above criteria, you may still be eligible for a low dose CT chest scan by participating in the I-ELCAP study for high-risk patients. Eligible patients must meet the following criteria and sign consent:

- Individuals 40-80 with no symptoms of lung cancer
- Former or current smokers with a minimum of a 10 pack year smoking history
- Smokers or non-smokers with a workplace exposure to radon gas or asbestos
- Individuals with a primary family member with lung cancer

The cost of the CT scan is \$375 for patients who enroll in the I-ELCAP. Grant funds may be available for eligible low-income participants to help cover the cost of the scan. For more information, contact the John Muir Clinical Research Department @ 925-674-2660.

Are there risks associated with LDCT screening?

There can be, but, as with most medical procedures, you must decide if the possible risks from the screening outweigh the possible benefits, you might receive.

Risk can include:

- CT scanning for lung cancer screening uses radiation. The low dose CT is 1.0mSv-1.5mSv, or 5 to 10 times less radiation than a conventional chest CT scan. The radiation exposure from the LDCT is similar to the radiation you receive in about 6 months of “normal” background radiation, which has a very low risk of causing cancer.
- Other potential harms from screening includes: false positive results, which means something seen on the CT looks like cancer, but is later proven not to be a cancer. This can cause patient anxiety and unnecessary testing.
- A false negative, which means nodules seen on CT are thought to be benign or not cancer, but turn out to be cancer.

What are the benefits of screening?

Lung cancer screening will not prevent cancer, but studies have shown people who were screened with CT scans were 20% less likely to die from lung cancer than those who were not screened with CT when appropriately treated. Finding cancer early generally means patient’s survival rates are much higher. The mainstay of treatments for early stage lung cancer is surgery. Treatments for advanced cancers generally require combinations of treatments.

Compared to mammography for breast cancer, lung cancer CT screening is at least as effective at reducing lung cancer deaths in the high-risk population as mammography is at preventing breast cancer deaths.

What are the first steps once I decide I want a lung cancer screening CT?

Your physician must determine if you meet all the requirements to qualify for lung cancer screening. This includes your age and smoking history. You must be very precise about the number of packs of cigarettes you smoked a day, the number of years you smoked and if you quit; the number of years since you quit smoking. Your physician will also have a “Shared Decision Making” discussion with you regarding all the risks and benefits of lung cancer screening. It is important that your health care provider answer all your questions regarding lung cancer screening benefits and risks.

I do not have a physician. Do I need to see a physician to get a lung cancer screening CT scan?

Yes, a physician must determine if you qualify for a lung cancer screening CT scan. A physician or his designee must provide you with a shared decision making visit and ensure that you are aware of all the risk and benefits of lung cancer screening. After that office visit, the physician can write the order for the CT scan. If you do not have a physician, please call (925) 952-2887 or visit johnmuirhealth.com.

What happens after I have had my scan?

Your physician will receive a copy of your scan results and discuss the results with you. If there is a positive result, your physician will recommend additional testing. Patients with lung nodules fall out of the lung cancer-screening program. Those patients may require more frequent CT scans or tests. Your insurance should pay for diagnostic scans/tests.

How many years will I continue to get a lung cancer screening?

Current smokers with normal findings should get a scan every year until the age of 77. Former smokers will get a scan only up to a 15 year history of having quit smoking (77 remains the age cut-off for all patients). Your physician will notify you when your next CT scan is due.

How much will lung cancer screening cost? Medicare - vs commercial payers

Patients who qualify under the Medicare and Medicaid criteria will receive the scan without a co-pay or cost share. Under the Affordable Health Care Plan, the scan is without cost share as an "Essential Health Benefit". For patients with commercial insurance who meet the screening criteria, your insurance plan may cover the full cost of the scan. Contact your insurance company directly to determine if your scan is without a cost share.

Where do I get more information regarding quitting smoking?

Tobacco use is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths in the United States. Smoking is the most preventable cause of death in our society. The Surgeon General has said, "Smoking cessation (stopping smoking) represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives". It is hard to quit, but you can do it! If you have quit, stay quit. For more information on your options to help you quit or stay smoke free visit the resources listed below:

John Muir Health

<https://www.johnmuirhealth.com/event-list/smoking-cessation--one-day-class.html>

California Smokers Helpline

www.nobutts.org

American Lung Association

<http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/how-to-quit/>

To learn more about any risks and/or benefit you may receive from LDCT screening and/or to determine if you qualify for lung cancer screening please talk to your physician or call 925-947-3322.