

Lung Cancer Can Strike Anyone

ATLANTA, Oct. 29, 2020 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- For Lung Cancer Awareness Month, the American Cancer Society (ACS) is warning that anyone can get lung cancer including people who smoke, people who have quit, and people who have never smoked. Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in both men and women, accounting for 1 in 4 cancer deaths in the United States. Reducing lung cancer deaths today can be achieved by curbing smoking, increasing screening for those at high risk, recognizing the symptoms of lung cancer, and promoting state-of-the-art diagnostic approaches and treatment for those diagnosed with the disease.

"Lung cancer has long been linked to smoking, which, unfortunately, has led to blaming the victim, and the stigmatization of lung cancer and people who develop this disease. This stigma can lead people to avoid screening and early diagnosis," said William Cance, MD, chief medical and scientific officer, American Cancer Society. "Nobody deserves to be blamed for developing lung cancer."

In 2020, an estimated 228,820 new cases of lung cancer are expected, and 135,720 cancer deaths. Nearly 80% of lung cancer deaths in the U.S. are thought to result from smoking, however, it can be diagnosed in anyone. About 25,000 people who have never smoked die of lung cancer each year. If counted as a separate category, lung cancers not caused by smoking would rank among the top ten causes of cancer deaths.

The ACS recommends yearly lung cancer screening with a low-dose CT scan (LDCT) for people at higher risk for lung cancer. Screening can detect lung cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be effective and save lives. If you currently smoke or previously quit, are age 55 or over, and in fairly good health, talk with your healthcare provider about your risk for lung cancer, what to expect from screening, and if screening is a good option for you. Screening for lung cancer is covered by most health insurance.

Regardless of whether you have ever smoked, the most common symptoms of lung cancer are:

- A cough that does not go away or gets worse
- Coughing up blood or rust-colored sputum (spit or phlegm)
- Chest pain that is often worse with deep breathing, coughing or laughing
- Hoarseness
- Weight loss and loss of appetite
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or weak
- Infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia that do not go away or keep coming back
- New onset of wheezing

"Lung cancer was once considered a terminal diagnosis, but today there is hope. We not only have the advances in early detection, but new approaches across the spectrum of treatments are helping lung cancer patients live longer," said Dr. Cance.

For more information on lung cancer, visit cancer.org.

SOURCE American Cancer Society

For further information: Charaighn Sesock: charaighn.sesock@cancer.org, American Cancer Society
