What is lung cancer with bone metastases?
Lung cancer with bone metastases refers to secondary or metastatic tumours formed from cancer cells that have broken away from a primary lung cancer and spread through the lymphatic system or blood stream to the bones. Lung cancer is the third most common cause of bone metastases.

Your clinician will assess the source of cancer found in your bones. If you find out you have metastatic bone tumours, this can be worrying and disappointing.

Understanding what is happening, what treatments are available and what you can expect can be important.

How do bone metastases affect people?
It may be that you become aware of pain in a specific part of your body. There are many reasons for pain, particularly following lung cancer treatment.

It is important to be aware of what is normal for you and any changes that you experience.

It is important for you to know that not all pain means metastasis. Your doctor may be able to help you tell the difference between bone metastasis pain and normal aches and pains or pains from other sources.

Pain is often felt at the site of the metastasis; this is called localised pain. You may notice that you are experiencing pain in areas surrounding the metastasis.

People with bone metastases describe the pain as gradually increasing over a period of time and becoming more severe. Pain is something that can be removed/reduced with medication and management.

A pain assessment can be provided. Your medical team will carry out further tests.

On rare occasions, pain and weakness in the legs along with loss of bowel and bladder function may indicate tumours impacting on the lower spine. These symptoms are considered a medical emergency so take action immediately. Contact emergency services.

Spinal tumours
People who have metastases to the spinal cord often have pain or discomfort that is worse at night or with bed rest. This may be caused by the tumour(s) compressing the spinal cord. Compression may also cause tingling in legs and pain when walking.

Tumours in the arms or legs
If you have a tumour in the long bones, such as those found in your arms and legs, you may have pain with activity or movement. In this case, you may experience less pain when you are not walking, moving or when you rest.

Pelvic tumours
This is a tumour which occurs most often in the pelvis (located between the hip bones).
**What types of treatment may be offered?**

- **Pain medication:** You may be given an oral anti-inflammatory and other medication including paracetamol, codeine, tramadol and morphine.
- **Radiotherapy:** Can be used to lessen pain and prevent fractures, relieve spinal cord compression. This treatment can be used for people who have had multiple metastases. Physicians may consider treating the metastases aggressively with the hope of longer-term survival. You will have an assessment of what treatment is best for you and may receive one or more doses depending on the extent of the tumour and location.
- **Bone modifying/targeted therapies:** These are treatments which help prevent cancer cells breaking down bone cells. Treatment such as zoledronic acid (brand name Zometa) is used. A targeted treatment such as denosumab (brand name Xgeva) is used to prevent skeletal related events in patients with bone metastases from solid tumours.

**If you want to think about your treatment**

Just because you have treatment options doesn’t mean that you have to take them. Find out as much as you can about these from your medical team. A group of healthcare professionals, known as multidisciplinary team (MDT), will talk about your case to work out the best treatment options for you.

**What other support can I get?**

Knowing your cancer is not curable can take a toll and is important to prioritise and focus on your wellbeing. There are many ways of getting support and help if you or someone you care for has bone metastases.

Talking to your family and trusted professionals will help with coming to terms with your diagnosis.

“I find talking and listening to others a good coping mechanism. I have found help in online forums where patients share and compare notes and have made several good friends here and abroad through these communities.”

**Jackie**

**Living with lung cancer**

**Freephone:** 0800 358 7200
**Email:** lungcancerhelp@roycastle.org