



ROY CASTLE
LUNG CANCER
FOUNDATION

Lung health and you

Looking after your lungs and steps to stay well



www.roycastle.org

Staying well

Your lungs supply oxygenated blood to your heart and other vital organs. Your lungs can be damaged by pollution in work, by cancer-causing chemicals in tobacco products and through exposure to naturally occurring cancer-causing agents.

As you get older your risk of lung cancer increases whether you are a lifelong smoker, an ex-smoker or have never smoked. It affects 46,000 people in the UK each year.

Lung cancer is not one disease but a range of different types of tumour that start growing in the lungs. The earlier changes are found the more treatment options can be used, which may cure the disease. We all need to be aware of any changes in our lung health, so use the table in the middle pages of this booklet to help you understand more about how your lungs are doing.

Steps to limit lung damage

1. Smoking causes damage to your lungs. It is best not to start smoking or to stop if you are a smoker. Help is available as it is not easy to break this addictive habit, see page 6.
2. Passive smoking (breathing in chemicals from other people's tobacco) increases your exposure to cancer-causing agents. Try to avoid smoky places and encourage people not to light up in cars or indoors.
3. Exposure to chemicals such as asbestos, diesel exhaust fumes and radon (a naturally occurring gas) increases your risk of developing lung cancer. Take precautions if you work in a polluted environment. If you are in a high radon risk area, test your home or for information about your area, visit: www.ukradon.org/information/ukmaps
4. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, being active and eating well will help keep your lungs working well and reduce your risk of cancer and other life limiting diseases.

Time to take action?

These are the potential signs of lung cancer:

- **Persistent cough**
- **Ongoing chest infections**
- **Coughing up blood**
- **Change in a long-term cough**
- **Chest or shoulder pain**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Unexplained weight loss, fatigue or breathlessness**



We have no sense of pain inside our lungs, so it can be difficult to spot changes until they affect our breathing or start to affect other parts of the chest or body.

If you have any of the above symptoms and they don't go away after three weeks visit your GP. They may be nothing serious, but it is worth getting yourself checked.

How are you doing?

If you are aware of any changes in your lung health use these pages to take notes (with as much detail as possible) and show them to your doctor if you are concerned.

Please put a date for any changes you have noticed and tick the box that is closest to how often you have been affected:

This affects me:

<i>I have experienced:</i>	Date I first noticed:	Occasionally	Every day
<i>Cough that lasted, changed or got worse</i>			
<i>Feeling breathless for no reason</i>			
<i>Coughing up blood or blood in spit</i>			
<i>Chest or shoulder pain</i>			
<i>Unexplained tiredness</i>			
<i>Unexplained weight loss</i>			
<i>Chest (respiratory) infection not improving after treatment or recurring</i>			

Any other notes about your concerns or changes in your health:

About me and my Lungs:

☐ I currently smoke

☐ I have COPD or emphysema

☐ I am an ex-smoker

☐ I have worked with diesel, asbestos etc.

☐ I have never smoked

☐ I have family experience of lung cancer

every day	Every week	Every month	Never affects me

Referral steps

There are guidelines on when your doctor should refer you, what tests you should receive and how quickly you should be offered treatment. If you have concerns talk to your doctor or contact our **Ask the nurse** service: **0800 358 7200**

**Discuss your symptoms with your doctor.
Your doctor will examine you.
Take this leaflet and talk through your symptoms.**



**Your doctor may arrange for you to have a chest
X-ray and talk to you about the results.**



**If you need more tests, your doctor should make an
appointment for you to see a lung specialist.**



**If you are diagnosed with
lung cancer you will be
referred on to a lung
cancer team for
treatment and care.**



**If your X-ray is clear, but
your symptoms continue
or get worse and you
are still concerned,
ask to see your doctor again.**



*The simple truth is, more people
are surviving because treatments
are better and more people are
getting checked earlier.*

*The earlier lung cancer is found,
the easier it is to treat and
more likely you are to survive.*



Professor Mick Peake

Hon. Professor of Respiratory Medicine, University of Leicester

Steps ahead

Lung cancer shortens the lives of thousands of people in the UK and across the world. When caught early there are many more treatment options that can treat and potentially cure the disease.

Too many people find out about their illness too late for this to happen. There are many new treatments being researched and used so early diagnosis can make all the difference.

At present in the UK there are a growing number of local research and pilot projects which aim to find lung cancer early. These involve encouraging people who may be at higher risk to come for an X-ray and/or CT scan before they notice any changes. If you are in an area where early detection or screening is available, it is worth finding out if you can take part.

One in every seven people who find out they have lung cancer are non-smokers. If you are a non or ex-smoker it still important to look after your lungs .

Smokers

If you currently smoke, there are many benefits in stopping. These include saving money, reducing your risk of COPD, lung cancer and heart disease. If you have been diagnosed with an illness affected by your smoking, quitting can mean treatment works better and your general health improves.

Breaking the habit can be hard, particularly if you are surrounded by other smokers, or have smoked for a long time.

Although e-cigarettes still contain the addictive nicotine, some studies put the risks of vaping at 5% of those of smoking. More research is needed to understand the risks and benefits of using e-cigarettes as a stop-smoking tool. Use them with caution, as a way of reducing and ultimately stopping smoking, not as an alternative until we know more about their long term safety.

Support services

England

NHS Smoking Helpline:

0800 022 4332

Website:

www.nhs.uk/smokefree

Scotland

Smokeline:

0800 848 484

Website:

www.canstopsmoking.com

Wales

Smokers Helpline:

0808 085 2219

Website:

www.stopsmokingwales.com

Northern Ireland

Want2Stop

Website:

www.want2stop.info

Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation online forum:
www.healthunlocked.com/quitsupport

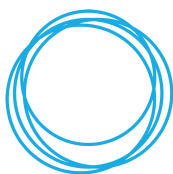
Local lung cancer pilots

In some areas of England there are pilot or research projects to help find people at risk of lung cancer earlier. Contact your GP or local Cancer Alliance to find out if you are in an area where a project is running.

Here for you

If you are worried about lung cancer, or you are affected by lung cancer, contact our **Ask the Nurse** service: **0800 358 7200**

or email: **lungcancerhelp@roycastle.org**



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Expect Better

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