

Position Statement for Consumers

Lung Cancer Screening for Smokers and Former Smokers

The Michigan Cancer Consortium recommends screening for people at risk of lung cancer, based on evidence from the National Cancer Institute's National Lung Screening Trial.

If you answer “yes” to these three questions, you should consider being screened for lung cancer:

1) Do you smoke, or did you quit smoking less than 15 years ago?

2) Do you have at least a 30 pack-year history of smoking?

To find your pack-year history, multiply the number of packs you smoke each day by the number of years you have smoked. For example, 1 pack a day x 30 years = 30 pack-years, 2 packs a day x 15 years = 30 pack-years

3) Are you 55-80 years of age?

Lung cancer screening means getting a CT or CAT scan of the chest. A CT scan is a series of computerized x-rays that gives better views of an area within the body. If the screening results are a concern, you may have more tests or procedures to determine if you have cancer. This helps you get the best treatment.

What are the risks?

The scan involves a low dose of radiation, similar to a mammogram or x-ray. Exposure to radiation, including x-rays and CT scans, can increase your risk of cancer in general, although this risk is low. Other risks could include the stress of having abnormalities detected and follow-up procedures associated with your CT scan, such as additional scans or biopsy.

If you feel you need to be screened for lung cancer, contact your health insurance company first to find out if they will pay for your screening test/CT scan.

NOTE: You have a greater chance of having lung cancer if you:

- smoke or used to smoke
- have moderate or severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema or chronic bronchitis)
- have a parent, sibling, or child who has had lung cancer

If you have questions about your risk of lung cancer, talk with your doctor or other health care provider.

The best way to prevent lung cancer is to not smoke. Don't allow smoking in your home, car or workplace. Avoid contact with other substances known to cause lung cancer. These include asbestos, radon, beryllium, nickel, chromium and uranium.

Quitting smoking is not easy, but getting help can help you succeed. If you smoke and want to quit:

- 1) talk to your health care provider
- 2) go to www.michigan.gov/tobacco for tools to help you quit smoking
- 3) call the Michigan Tobacco QuitLine at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) for help over the phone