



# Learn about lung cancer and your risk of getting it

Your risk is the chance that you will get lung cancer.

In this booklet, you'll learn about:



What lung cancer is



Risk factors that raise your chance of getting lung cancer



Finding lung cancer early, before you have symptoms



## What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer is cancer that starts in the tissue of the lungs. It starts when cells in the lungs start to grow and make copies without control. A group of these changed cells may form a tumor.

### Why do cells start to grow out of control?

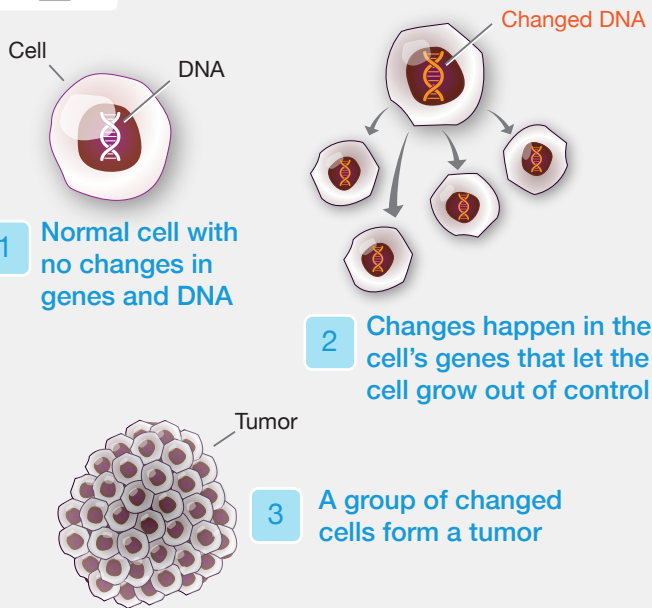
Changes (mutations) in a cell's **gene** let the cell grow and make copies without any control. Normally, cells have a certain growth and death cycle to keep their number in check. Your body can usually find changes and correct them.

A **gene** is the code within a cell that tells it how to grow. Genes contain DNA.

Sometimes, your body can't find and correct a change. This is when the cell can grow and make copies without control.



### How cells can grow out of control



Doctors keep improving the treatments for lung cancer, but it still causes more deaths than any other cancer in the U.S. and around the world.



## What are the risk factors that raise my chance of getting lung cancer?

Although anyone can get lung cancer, many factors raise your risk of getting lung cancer:



**Using tobacco**, such as smoking cigarettes, cigars, or marijuana. It's likely that e-cigarettes can also raise your chance.



**Being around smoke** from another person smoking cigarettes, cigars, or marijuana – also called secondhand exposure



Living or working in a building that contains **radon**, a radioactive gas you cannot see, smell, or taste. Radon damages cells in your lungs.



Having a job where you are exposed to **cancer-causing chemicals** such as asbestos, arsenic, chromium, nickel, soot, tar, or other substances



Being exposed to **air pollution**, such as:

- Outdoor air polluted with diesel fumes, dust, or chemical solvents
- Indoor air polluted with fumes from kerosene, coal, or types of fuel



Having a **family history** of lung cancer, such as a parent, brother, sister, son, or daughter who have had lung cancer



Having a **history of lung disease** such as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), chronic (long-lasting) bronchitis and emphysema, or pulmonary fibrosis with lung tissue scarring



Drinking water that has **arsenic** in it, such as from a well



Having a **history of radiation therapy** to your chest area as treatment for other cancers, such as for breast cancer or lymphoma



## Why is it important to find lung cancer early?

When lung cancer is found early, it is easier to treat and your chance of living longer is much higher. Lung cancer screening means checking for cancer before you have any symptoms.



Current guidelines for who should get a lung cancer screening are based only on a person's smoking history and age.

### **Talk with your doctor about:**

- Ways to lower your risk of getting lung cancer
- If you should have a screening

Visit [LUNGevity.org](https://LUNGevity.org) to learn more about lung cancer screening and find other booklets in this series

**Booklet 2** Lung cancer screening can find cancer early and save your life

**Booklet 3** Should you get screening for lung cancer? Talk with your doctor to decide

**Booklet 4** Lung cancer screening and health insurance: Know what insurance will cover

**Booklet 5** Prepare for your lung cancer screening: What to expect during a low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) scan

**Booklet 6** After your lung cancer screening: Understand your low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) scan results and next steps



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