Learn about lung cancer screening and how it can save your life

What is lung cancer screening?

Screening for lung cancer is checking for cancer before you have any symptoms. Lung cancer that is found and treated at an early stage has a much better chance of being treated. Currently, lung cancer screening is only recommended for people who have a higher risk of getting lung cancer and meet certain criteria. Your risk is the chance that you will get lung cancer.

How do doctors screen for lung cancer?

To screen for lung cancer, doctors use a low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) scan. It is a type of imaging test that is also called low-dose spiral CT scan or helical CT scan. An LDCT scan uses X-rays to create 3D images of the inside of your chest. It uses a very small amount of radiation.

Talk with your doctor to decide if you should have a lung cancer screening and what you can do to lower your risk of getting lung cancer.
Why is lung cancer screening important?

Screening with a yearly LDCT scan is the best way to find lung cancer at an early stage, before it has spread to other parts of the body.

In a large clinical trial, current and former smokers screened with LDCT over many years had a 20% less chance of dying of lung cancer than those who were screened with a chest X-ray.

LDCT scans:

- Are quick and painless, like having a picture taken
- Take pictures of the inside of your body that are much more detailed than chest X-rays
- Can find smaller lung growths (abnormalities) that could be cancer, compared to chest X-rays

To learn more, visit LUNGevity.org and read the 6 mini booklets in the lung cancer screening series.