



womenshealth.gov

1-800-994-9662

TDD: 1-888-220-5446

Lung Cancer

Q: What is lung cancer?

A: Cancer is a disease in which certain body cells don't function right, divide very fast, and produce too much tissue that forms a tumor. The lungs, a pair of sponge-like, cone-shaped organs, are part of the body's respiratory system. When we breathe in, the lungs take in oxygen, which our cells need to live and carry out their normal functions. When we breathe out, the lungs get rid of carbon dioxide, which is a waste product of the body's cells. Cancers that begin in the lungs are divided into two major types, non-small cell lung cancer and small cell lung cancer, depending on how the cells look under a microscope. Each type of lung cancer grows and spreads in different ways and is treated differently.

Q: Why should I be concerned about lung cancer?

A: In 2004, lung cancer accounted for more deaths than breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colon cancer combined. In 2008, it is estimated that there will be 215,020 new lung cancer

cases and 161,840 deaths from lung cancer. It is the second most common cancer among white and American Indian/Alaska Native women, and the third most common cancer among black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic women.

Cigarette smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. It is responsible for 87 percent of lung cancer deaths. Secondhand smoke is responsible for an estimated 3,000 lung cancer deaths among U.S. nonsmokers each year. Today, 18 percent of women still smoke in the U.S.

We already know that the best way to prevent lung cancer is to quit (or never start) smoking. The sooner a person quits smoking the better. Even if you have been smoking for many years, it's never too late to benefit from quitting.

Q: Where can I find out more about lung cancer?

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is the federal government's authority on lung cancer. Contact them at 800-4-CANCER (800-422-6237) or go to the following web site: <http://www.nci.nih.gov/cancerinfo/wyntk/lung>. ■



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For More Information

For more information on lung cancer, call the Womenshealth.gov Call Center at 1-800-994-9662 or contact the following organizations:

National Cancer Institute

Cancer Information Service

Phone: (800) 422-6237

Internet Address: <http://cis.nci.nih.gov/>

National Cancer Institute Smoking Quitline

Phone: (877) 784-8669

Internet Address:

<http://www.smokefree.gov>

Tobacco Information and Prevention Source (TIPS)

National Center for Chronic Disease

Prevention and Health Promotion, CDC

Phone: (800) 232-4636

Internet: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>

American Cancer Society

Phone number: (800) 227-2345

Internet address: <http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp?level=0>

American Lung Association

Phone: (800) 586-4872

Internet Address: <http://www.lungusa.org/>

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