



Recognizing the Signs of Lung Cancer

A Checklist To Help You Identify & Track
Potential Lung Cancer Symptoms

When a Cough Just Won't Go Away

Maybe you or a loved one have developed a persistent, nagging cough. Or, maybe wheezing and shortness of breath.

No matter the issue, it can be unnerving to experience a sudden change in your health. Though your symptoms are likely benign or related to a non-cancerous condition, they may be suggestive of lung cancer.

In this guide, we discuss the warning signs of lung cancer. We also offer our **printable Lung Cancer Detection Checklist** to help you document any medical issues you are experiencing.

The Importance of Early Detection

Since **early detection can decrease lung cancer mortality by 20%**, you must schedule an appointment with your general practitioner as soon as you notice unexplained symptoms¹.

Be sure to bring your completed Lung Cancer Detection Checklist to your appointment.

This checklist will prompt productive conversation, allowing your physician to determine a proper action plan.

For some patients, this action plan may involve a referral to a radiation oncologist like SERO.

As the leading provider of radiation services in Charlotte, SERO is dedicated to offering kind and compassionate oncological care, from diagnosis to recovery.

About SERO

Care in action.™

SERO is a team of more than 30 board-certified physicians practicing radiation oncology across the Charlotte Metro area. Our goal is to support patients in their cancer journey by providing a spectrum of radiation services.

[treatcancer.com](https://www.treatcancer.com)
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What Is Lung Cancer?

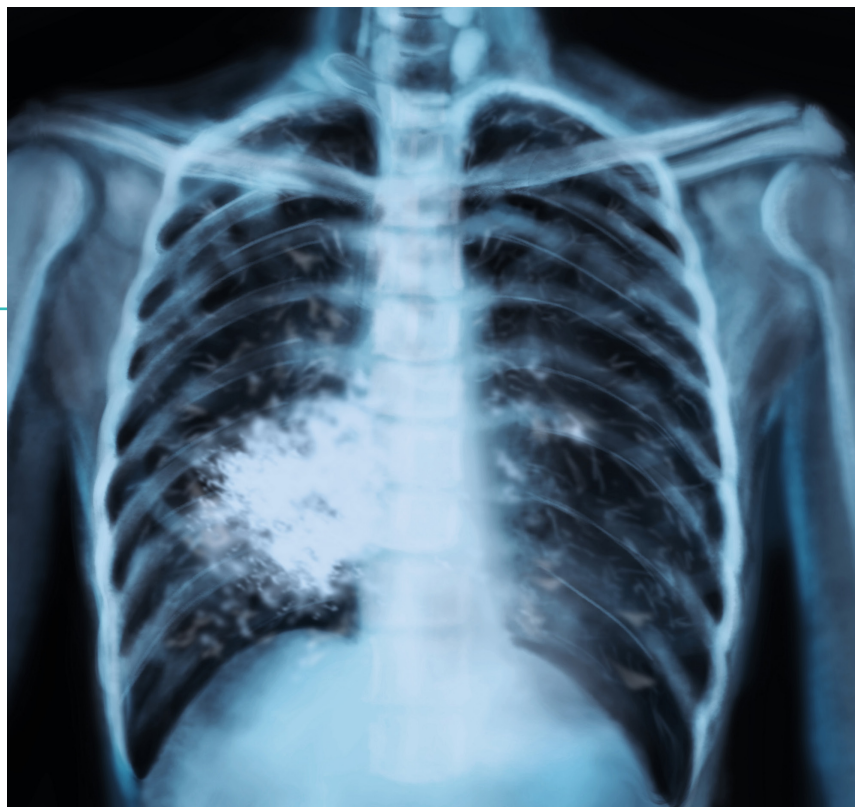
Cancer is a disease in which abnormal cells grow and divide uncontrollably. When cancer originates in the lungs, it is called lung cancer.

Smoking is the number one cause of lung cancer. However, being exposed to substances like asbestos and radon can also increase your chances of developing the disease. A family history of lung cancer is a risk factor as well.

Unfortunately, **lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death.**

The five-year survival rate for distant tumors (cancer that has spread from the lungs to other parts of the body) is only 5%.

However, if the disease is detected before it metastasizes, the five-year survival rate is 56%¹.



How Is Lung Cancer Diagnosed?

Some cases of lung cancer are detected via a lung cancer screening. If abnormalities are detected, a tissue sample (biopsy) will be needed to confirm the presence of cancer.

However, preventative screenings are only offered to smokers and former smokers ages 50 and up. Because of this, most cases of lung cancer are discovered after patients begin experiencing symptoms.

If cancer is suspected, your general practitioner will likely refer you to an oncologist who will order diagnostic imaging tests. Then, if needed, a biopsy will be conducted.



Types of Lung Cancer

There are two main types of lung cancer: **small cell lung cancer (SCLC)** and **non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)**. Each is treated very differently.

SCLC is the least common type of lung cancer, accounting for only 10 to 15% of all cases². Unfortunately, **SCLC is also the most aggressive type of lung cancer**. About 70 percent² of patients with SCLC have metastatic cancer by the time they are diagnosed.

NSCLC accounts for 80 to 85% of all lung cancer cases and is generally less aggressive than SCLC².

Lung Cancer Detection Checklist



When you experience a sudden change in your health, the first step should be to **schedule an appointment with your general practitioner**. Then, use this printable checklist to document your symptoms and take notes.

Lung Cancer Risk Factors

- I currently smoke
- I am an ex-smoker
- I have been exposed to secondhand smoke
- I have COPD or emphysema
- I have worked in mills, mines, textile plants, or shipyards
- I have been exposed to diesel exhaust, radioactive ores, or inhaled chemicals
- I have a personal or family history of lung cancer

LUNG CANCER SYMPTOM TRACKER

Symptom

**Do you experience
this symptom?**

**Date first noticed
and frequency**

Coughing

- Yes
- No

- Occasionally
- Every day
- Multiple times per day

Notes: Is your cough dry or productive? Do you cough up blood or rust-colored phlegm? Does your cough get worse at night and interfere with sleep? Include any relevant details below.

Lung Cancer Detection Checklist



LUNG CANCER SYMPTOM TRACKER

Symptom

Do you experience this symptom?

Date first noticed and frequency

Chest pain

- Yes
 No

- Occasionally
 Every day
 Multiple times per day

Notes: How severe is your chest pain? Does it get worse when you cough, laugh, breathe deeply, or exercise? Include any relevant details below.

Repeated respiratory infections

- Yes
 No

- Occasionally
 Every day
 Multiple times per day

Notes: Have you experienced frequent infections like bronchitis or pneumonia? Have you been hospitalized for these infections? Include any relevant details below.

Shortness of breath

- Yes
 No

- Occasionally
 Every day
 Multiple times per day

Notes: Do you struggle to catch your breath when completing daily tasks (e.g. walking, cleaning, getting dressed)? Does your chest feel tight? Include any relevant details below.

Lung Cancer Detection Checklist



LUNG CANCER SYMPTOM TRACKER

Symptom

Do you experience this symptom?

Date first noticed and frequency

Hoarseness

- Yes
- No

- Occasionally
- Every day
- Multiple times per day

Notes: Do you have a raspy voice? Do you feel the need to clear your throat often? Include any relevant details below.

Wheezing

- Yes
- No

- Occasionally
- Every day
- Multiple times per day

Notes: Do you hear a high-pitched whistling when you breathe in and out? Does your wheezing get worse with physical activity? Include any relevant details below.

Fatigue

- Yes
- No

- Occasionally
- Every day
- Multiple times per day

Notes: Do you feel tired and lethargic no matter how much you sleep? Does this fatigue interfere with your everyday life? Include any relevant details below.

Lung Cancer Detection Checklist



LUNG CANCER SYMPTOM TRACKER

Symptom

**Do you experience
this symptom?**

**Date first noticed
and frequency**

Weight loss

- Yes
- No

- Occasionally
- Every day
- Multiple times per day

Notes: Have you lost weight without trying? If so, how much and over what period of time? Include any relevant details below.

Swelling (edema)

- Yes
- No

- Occasionally
- Every day
- Multiple times per day

Notes: Do you experience swelling of the face, neck, arms, legs, and/or feet? Include any relevant details below.

Next Steps

- 1 **Schedule an appointment.** If you answered “yes” to any of the symptoms above, schedule an appointment with your general practitioner. Your physician can conduct preliminary tests to determine if the symptoms may be related to cancer.
- 2 **Coordinate diagnostic testing.** If your general practitioner believes lung cancer may be a possibility, he or she will refer you to an oncologist. This medical professional will then order a low-dose computerized tomography scan. If the diagnostic imaging test reveals an abnormality, a tissue biopsy will be needed.
- 3 **Find your cancer care team.** Should you need oncological treatment, request a referral to SERO. Our team of radiation oncologists can provide the state-of-the-art cancer care and compassionate support you deserve.

Sources

- 1 <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-look-up/lung-cancer/resource-library/lung-cancer-fact-sheet>
- 2 <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/lung-cancer/about/what-is.html>



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