Should I be screened for lung cancer?

In the United States, lung cancer is the second most common cancer regardless of gender and is the leading cause of death from cancer.

Lung cancer is a serious disease but if caught early enough, some people may be successfully treated. If lung cancer is caught at an early stage, before it has spread, people have a better chance of living longer.

Current and former smokers are at a higher risk of getting lung cancer as they get older. Smokers can lower their risk of getting and dying from lung cancer if they quit smoking.

It is important to find lung cancers early. Usually symptoms of lung cancer don’t appear until the disease is already at an advanced, non-curable stage. Even when lung cancer does cause symptoms, many people mistake them for other symptoms like an infection or a long-term cough.

SCREENING CAN FIND CANCER EARLY

Screening for lung cancer is a way to find disease in people before they actually show symptoms, increasing the chances of finding cancer at an early stage. Regular chest X-rays were first used to find the disease but they didn’t help people live any longer. Recently, a test known as low-dose CT scan has been studied in people at higher risk of getting lung cancer. Research has shown that these scans have saved more lives than chest X-rays. Yearly low-dose CT scans before symptoms start help lower the risk of dying from lung cancer.
Opioid addiction is destroying lives all across America, with 11.4 million people misusing prescription opioids and an estimated 130+ people dying every day from opioid-related drug overdoses.* Not everyone who uses opioids becomes addicted, but for those who do, the results can be devastating.

WHO IS AT RISK?
It's often said that “drugs don’t discriminate,” which means that in theory, anyone can become addicted. While this is true, certain risk factors can make some people more likely than others to develop opioid use disorder, or opioid addiction, including:

1. **An existing addiction:** If you already have an addiction to tobacco, alcohol or other drugs, this means you might more easily become addicted to opioids.

2. **A family history of addiction:** Some research suggests that inherited genes can account for half your likelihood of becoming addicted.

3. **Being a young adult:** Prescription drug abuse is most common in young adults.

4. **Mental illness:** Nearly 1 in 5 adults in the United States lives with a mental illness like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Medicines like opioids can produce a feeling of euphoria, offering relief from emotional distress.

5. **Easily available drugs:** Some opioids are illegal, like heroin, and some are prescribed painkillers. Having easy access to the drugs increases your risk for misusing them.

Sometimes a doctor prescribes an opioid for the pain associated with recovery from surgery or a traumatic injury. Many people safely use prescription drugs to manage pain, but their use does raise the risk of addiction, especially for those with chronic pain.

REDUCE YOUR RISK
If you are prescribed an opioid, talk to your doctor about your risk factors and concerns you have about their dangers. Be sure to discard your medication when you no longer need it, and do not keep prescriptions around to use later.

Talk to your doctor if you’re worried about the risks of opioid addiction for yourself or a loved one.

* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
CRUNCHY VEGETABLE WRAPS

This colorful wrap is loaded with a rainbow of veggies!
Number of servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

4 tablespoons cream cheese, low-fat (whipped)
2 flour tortillas
½ teaspoon ranch seasoning mix
¼ cup broccoli (washed and chopped)
¼ cup carrot (peeled and grated)
¼ cup zucchini (washed and cut into small strips)
¼ cup summer squash (yellow, washed and cut into small strips)
½ tomato (diced)
⅛ cup green bell pepper (seeded and diced)
2 tablespoons chives (chopped fine)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, stir ranch seasoning into cream cheese, chill.
2. Wash and chop vegetables.
3. Steam broccoli in microwave for 1 minute with 1 tablespoon of water.
4. Spread cream cheese onto flour tortilla, staying 1 inch from edge.
   Sprinkle vegetables over cream cheese. Roll tortilla tightly.
5. Chill for 1–2 hours before serving (the wrap will hold its shape better).
   With a sharp knife, slice into circles and serve.

Nutritional information per serving: 111 calories; 4 g total fat; 1 g saturated fat; 5 mg cholesterol;
210 mg sodium; 18 g total carbohydrates; 2 g dietary fiber; 2 g total sugars; 0 g added sugars;
4 g protein; 88 mg calcium; 1 mg iron; 193 mg potassium.

Recipe courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, whatscooking.fns.usda.gov.

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The American Cancer Society guidelines for lung cancer screening:

- Men and women who are 55-74 years old, in fairly good health, AND:
- Are current smokers or smokers who have quit in the past 15 years, AND:
- Have at least a 30 pack-year smoking history, AND:
- Receive counseling to quit smoking if they are current smokers, AND:
- Have been told by their doctor about the possible benefits, limits, and harms of screening with low-dose CT scans, AND:
- Have access to a facility with experience in lung cancer screening and treatment.

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT!

Remember it’s never too late to quit smoking. By quitting smoking, you lower your risk of diabetes and heart disease, shortness of breath decreases, your heart rate and blood pressure return to normal, circulation improves and your chances of getting other cancers that are linked to smoking are also reduced.

The providers at Wayne County Hospital and Clinics can help determine if it’s appropriate for you to have a lung cancer screening. Call 641-872-2260 to make an appointment today.

For more information regarding lung cancer, visit www.cancer.org.

Information from this article obtained from the American Cancer Society.
Introducing Ernest Perea, MD
Family Practice Physician

Dr. Perea brings a strong personal commitment to patient-centered care to his medical practice. Fluent in two languages, he excels at building strong, sensitive relationships with his patients and community.

- Specialties include occupational medicine
- Experienced in pediatric and geriatric care
- Fluent in English and Spanish
- Board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine
- Air Force veteran with a distinguished military career in intelligence