



Lung Cancer Awareness



Lung cancer, sometimes referred to as lung carcinoma, usually occurs when cigarette smoke or inhaled chemicals damage lung cells, leading to genetic changes that cause them to grow abnormally. Over time, the abnormal cells can develop into a tumor that impairs lung function and, if left untreated, spreads to other body parts.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, most lung cancers develop in the airways (bronchi or bronchioles) or the small air sacs (alveoli).

Types of Lung Cancer

While many cancers affect the lungs, the Cleveland Clinic notes that doctors, examining the cells from which they originate, categorize them into two main types:

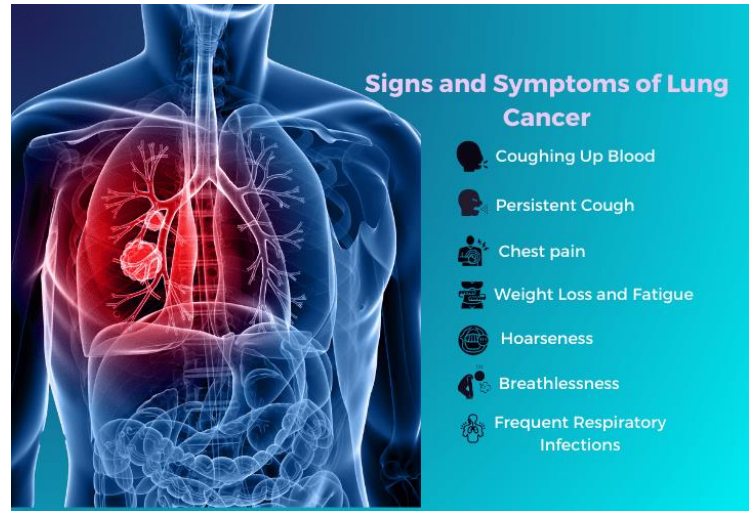
Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) - comprises over 80% of all lung cancer cases and includes adenocarcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma.

Small-cell lung cancer (SCLC) - develops more quickly than NSCLC and, as a result, is harder to treat.

Symptoms

During its early stages, lung cancer may not exhibit any symptoms, but as it progresses, there may be the following:

- A persistent cough.
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath.
- Chest pain or discomfort.
- Wheezing.
- Coughing up blood.
- Hoarseness.
- Loss of appetite.



Risk factors

Several factors can increase someone's chances of developing lung cancer, the Cleveland Clinic explains. Among the risk factors, the most common are:

- Smoking tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, and pipes.
- Exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke.
- Exposure to harmful substances, such as radon, asbestos, uranium, and diesel exhaust.
- Previous exposure to radiation treatments to your chest.
- Having a family history of lung cancer.

Diagnosis

According to the Cleveland Clinic, healthcare providers diagnose lung cancer in several steps, typically starting with a review of the patient's medical history and a physical examination. Then, if lung cancer is suspected, they may perform the following tests:

- Blood tests.
- Imaging tests, such as X-rays and CT scans.
- Biopsy.

Treatment

As with most other cancers, treatment for lung cancer is most effective when the tumor is in its early stages, meaning it is localized and has not spread. Treatments for lung cancer, the Cleveland Clinic explains, include:

Surgery - removes the tumor and some healthy surrounding tissue.

Radiofrequency ablation - uses high-energy radio waves to heat and destroy cancer cells.

Radiation therapy - uses high-energy beams to kill cancer cells.

Chemotherapy - uses drugs to stop cancer cells from growing.

Targeted therapy - stops the mutations that cause cells to grow abnormally.

Immunotherapy - enhances the immune system's ability to fight cancer cells.

Prevention

The exact causes of lung cancer are unknown, but the Cleveland Clinic recommends implementing the following measures to lower your risk of developing the disease:

- Avoid smoking.
- Avoid secondhand smoke and other substances that can harm your lungs.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get screened for lung cancer if you're at high risk.

What is the Cancer Society doing to help?

The Cancer Society offers the following programs and services for cancer patients and caregivers:

- Cancer Caring Centre for Family Islanders
- Adult Support Group
- Freedom Kids Club
- Port-a-Caths and needles

To learn more about our work or how you can get involved, visit

www.cancersocietybahamas.org/newsletter, call us at (242) 323-4441 or (242) 325-2483, or email us at info@cancersocietybahamas.org. Whether as a volunteer, spokesperson, or advocate, your involvement can make a difference in creating a healthier Bahamas.