

LUNG CANCER



Lung cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in Northern Ireland and is the leading cause of cancer related deaths. Every year in Northern Ireland 1,200 people are diagnosed with lung cancer and around 900 people die from the disease.

Anyone can develop lung cancer, but some people have a higher risk than others. 9 out of 10 cases are caused by smoking. If you want to quit the habit, find out more about our Stop Smoking service by contacting us on **028 9066 3281** or **behealthy@cancerfocusni.org**.

You have an increased risk of lung cancer if you:

- Smoke
- Have a family history of lung cancer
- Are exposed to certain chemicals that may cause cancer (like asbestos)
- Are exposed to second hand smoke
- Are aged over 65

While smoking is easily the biggest risk factor for lung cancer, 1 in 8 of those with the disease have never smoked. Whatever your age, gender or lifestyle it's vitally important to know the signs and symptoms to look out for – the earlier the diagnosis, the better chance of recovery.

Signs and symptoms

Signs and symptoms of lung cancer may include:

- Having a cough for more than three weeks
- A change in a cough that you've had for a long time
- A chest infection that isn't getting better, even with antibiotics
- Being short of breath
- Coughing up spit or phlegm with signs of blood in it
- Chest pain - a dull ache or a sharp pain when breathing or coughing
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling more tired than normal
- Swelling in the face or neck
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Losing your voice / hoarseness, but no sore throat

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Some of these symptoms are very common and may not be caused by cancer. If you have any of these for a prolonged period of time it is important you visit your GP.

Early diagnosis

The earlier a cancer is detected, the easier it is to treat and the more likely the treatment is to be successful. It's vitally important that you go to your GP as soon as possible if you notice any worrying symptoms.

What can I expect when visiting my GP?

Your GP will ask about your general health and then examine you. If necessary your GP will refer you to hospital for a chest x-ray to check for anything that looks abnormal in your lungs.

Your GP may take some routine blood tests and may also ask you to provide some phlegm samples. If you need further tests your GP will arrange an appointment with a chest specialist.

If you have a question about cancer call our **free** and confidential support helpline on **0800 783 3339** to speak with a specialised nurse (available Monday-Friday 9am – 1pm). You can also email us on **helpline@cancerfocusni.org**.



*Freephone Information
& Support Helpline*

0800 783 3339

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