



### What affects your risk?

#### Tobacco smoke

Smoking is the major cause of lung cancer and is linked to around nine out of 10 cases. The good news is that when you quit smoking, your risk of developing lung cancer will go down over time. It is the length of time you smoke for that has the biggest effect on your risk. So the sooner you quit, the sooner your risk of lung cancer will start to reduce.

**There is good evidence that smokers are more likely to quit successfully if they get professional support. For help quitting you can call Quitline free on 0800 002200.**

Anyone can develop lung cancer. But people who smoke (or used to smoke) have an increased risk.

**Smoking affects people around you too.** Second-hand smoke can increase a non-smoker's risk of developing lung cancer by about a quarter.

#### Age

Lung cancer is more common in older people. Over eight out of 10 cases are in people aged 60 and over.

#### Chest problems

People who have problems with their chest such as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) have a higher risk of developing lung cancer. They may have cough, phlegm and breathlessness.

### Your surroundings

**Radon** is a natural gas that can be found in the air and increases the risk of lung cancer, especially in smokers. It is normally found at low levels, but some parts of the UK have higher levels of radon than normal. If you are worried about radon levels in your area, you can find out more on the Health Protection Agency website [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

A small number of lung cancers are caused by a lot of exposure to industrial chemicals and air pollution, which some people are exposed to in the course of their jobs.

**Asbestos** is an insulating material that was used in industry in the past. But it has been banned in the UK since 1999. Exposure to asbestos can cause lung cancer and mesothelioma. **Mesothelioma** is a rare type of cancer that affects the outer layer that covers the lungs.

**'I think if anybody has any signs or symptoms at all that they are worried about, don't worry. Just go to your doctor as quickly as possible. They won't be cross with you. I'm sure I wouldn't be here if I hadn't gone to my doctor.'**

*Ann Long, lung cancer survivor*

### Further information

For more about cancer visit our patient information website [www.cancerhelp.org.uk](http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk)

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our information nurses on freephone **0808 800 4040**.

For more about the signs and symptoms of cancer visit [www.spotcancerearly.com](http://www.spotcancerearly.com)

Our health messages are based on scientific evidence. Find out more at [www.cancerresearchuk.org/health](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health)

All our leaflets are thoroughly researched and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. They are reviewed externally by independent experts and updated regularly. You can order our full range of leaflets free online at [www.cancerresearchuk.org/leaflets](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/leaflets)

### About Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK is the world's leading charity dedicated to research into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. If you would like to support our work, please call **020 7121 6699** or visit our website [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

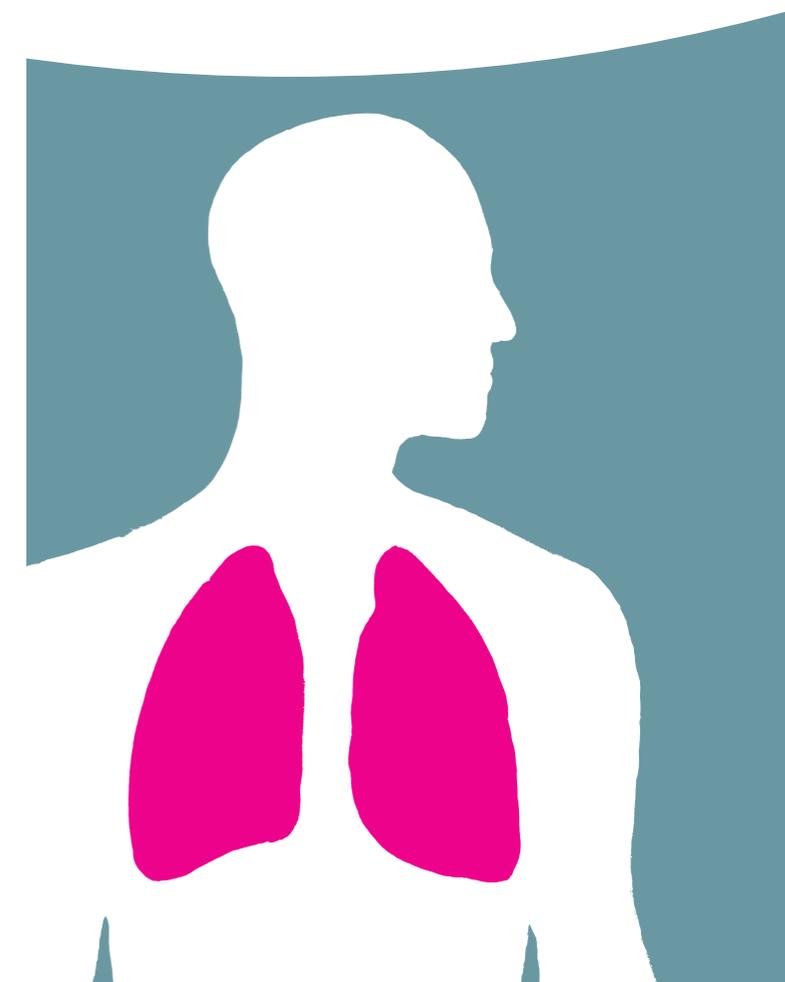
*Together we will beat cancer*

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# Detecting lung cancer

spot the symptoms early



Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in the UK. Anyone can develop lung cancer, but some people have a higher risk than others.

When lung cancer is found at an early stage, treatment is often easier and more likely to be successful. So spotting cancer early can make a real difference.

In this leaflet you can find out about what symptoms to look out for and why it is important to get them checked out.



**'Lung cancer never crossed my mind. Any sort of cancer never crossed my mind because I was fit and healthy and just getting on with my life really.'**

Ann Long, lung cancer survivor

### Busting lung cancer myths

**Myth:** Coughing up blood is the earliest sign of lung cancer.

**Fact:** The first signs are often a cough that won't go away and shortness of breath. It's important to see your doctor if you're worried about any symptom.

**Myth:** Only cigarette smokers develop lung cancer.

**Fact:** In the UK, around one in 13 lung cancer deaths are in people who have never regularly smoked cigarettes.

**Myth:** Lung cancer cannot be cured.

**Fact:** When lung cancer is spotted at an early stage, the chances of surviving are greatly improved.

**Myth:** If you smoke, the damage is done, so there's no point giving up.

**Fact:** Quitting will reduce your risk of developing lung cancer and other diseases and increase your chance of responding better to treatment.

**It is always worth giving up, no matter how long you have smoked.**

### What should you look out for?

If you notice any of these symptoms it is important to get them checked out without delay:

- a cough that won't go away
- a change in a cough you have had for a long time
- being short of breath
- blood in your phlegm
- repeated chest infections
- a lasting chest and/or shoulder pain
- unexplained tiredness
- unexplained weight loss

Some of these symptoms are very common and may not be caused by cancer. But you've got nothing to lose by getting them checked out. If they are serious, you could have everything to gain. Spotting cancer at an early stage can make a real difference – it could save your life.

Anyone can develop lung cancer, so it is best to see your doctor if you have any of these signs and symptoms or notice any other problems with your chest.

### Mike's story



**'I had smoked since I was 14. We had a depot not far from where I lived. I'd been working in that depot and I went into the toilets, I coughed and it didn't feel right. For some reason I spat it in the sink. There was a little**

**speck of blood in it. I didn't ignore it but I didn't panic about it. But a couple of days after, the same thing happened again. I came home and called my wife and told her I'd been spitting blood. She contacted our doctor.**

After I'd had the bronchoscopy, they knew then that I had lung cancer. If you've got any signs at all, whether you smoke or not, if you're coughing a lot or getting out of breath, getting tired or not being able to do the things that you used to, then go and see your doctor. If you go early enough, you've a good chance of surviving. And it's no good dressing it up, those are the facts.

**Fear stops people doing what they should do, and that's going and seeing your doctor.'**

Mike Edwards, lung cancer survivor