

Lung Cancer: Australia's Quiet Killer

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death.

In Australia, lung cancer is the 5th most diagnosed cancer, excluding non-melanoma skin cancers, and accounts for nearly 1 in 5 cancer deaths (1).

Lung cancer is often diagnosed at an advanced stage, as early-stage disease may not cause noticeable symptoms, making early detection difficult (2).

Lung Cancer Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms of lung cancer may include:

- shortness of breath
- changes to the voice such as hoarseness
- chest pain
- coughing or spitting up blood
- a new cough that does not go away
- chest infection that lasts more than three weeks or keeps coming back
- enlarged fingertips
- loss of appetite
- unexplained weight loss
- tiredness

Many of these symptoms can be caused by other health issues - but if you notice one or more of these symptoms lasting more than a few weeks, it's important to see your doctor.

Causes of Lung Cancer

Factors that can increase your risk of lung cancer include:

- smoking tobacco
- second-hand (passive) smoking
- exposure to asbestos
- exposure to radon (radioactive gas)
- exposure to occupational substances such as arsenic, cadmium, nickel, diesel fumes and soot
- HIV infection
- family history
- history of lung diseases such as lung fibrosis or emphysema
- older age



- (1) Cancer Council
- (2) Healthdirect
- (3) Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Preventing Lung Cancer

Quitting smoking is one of the most powerful steps you can do to reduce your risk of cancer. Tobacco smoke contains more than **7000 chemicals**, including over **70 known carcinogens** – substances that can cause cancer.

In fact, the most in-depth study on cancer causes in Australia estimated that **81% of lung cancers in 2010 were linked to tobacco smoking** (1).

You can greatly lower your risk by:

- Not smoking or quitting tobacco
- Avoiding second-hand smoke
- Reducing exposure to cancer-causing agents (carcinogens) at work

Quitting smoking is tough - but you're not alone. There are many ways to quit, and plenty of support and resources available to help you succeed.

Call Quitline on 13 78 48 for help to quit smoking and vaping. You can talk to a counsellor or request a callback. If you need language support, Quitline will connect you with an interpreter.

[Click here for more information and resources on how to quit smoking.](#)

Lung Cancer Screening Program Now Live

The **National Lung Cancer Screening Program (NLCSP)** was launched by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing on **July 1** to help save lives and improve health outcomes for Australians at risk of lung cancer.

This program offers **free low-dose CT scans** to detect early signs of lung cancer in people at higher risk due to age and smoking history. **When found early, over 65% of lung cancers can be successfully treated** (3).

You may be eligible if you:

- Are aged 50 to 70
- Do not have any symptoms of lung cancer (that is, you feel well)
- Currently smoke or quit within the last 10 years



Finding lung cancer early can save your life.

**Your GP can help – book a visit today to learn more.
To help find a GP, you can [visit Healthdirect here.](#)**