



Think Lung Cancer

Early Detection of lung cancer improves survival

You can help

We all know someone affected by cancer. We all can have a role to improve survival.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in Ireland. For those who do develop lung cancer, early detection is vital to improving survival. Most people in Ireland with lung cancer are diagnosed when it has progressed to a late stage and is harder to cure. If lung cancer is diagnosed at an early stage there is a 51% chance of 5 year survival compared to 4% if diagnosed at late stage¹.

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) and partners want to improve lung cancer outcomes by diagnosing cases of lung cancer early. We are working with the public, community organisations and healthcare professionals.

What we know

A National Survey on Lung Cancer Awareness, together with focus groups, undertaken amongst those at high risk of lung cancer living in Ireland has shown that in relation to lung cancer:

- Knowledge of risk factors, signs and symptoms is high amongst high-risk individuals
- A significant proportion of patients at higher risk do not feel confident that they would notice signs or symptoms in themselves
- Smokers and ex-smokers feel a strong sense of shame and fatalism
- The commonest reason for reluctance to see a doctor is 'fear of what the doctor might find'.

The impact of Covid-19

The outbreak of Covid19 in Ireland was followed by a fall in the number of electronic referrals to Rapid Access Lung Clinics. We are concerned that people with symptoms suspicious for lung cancer are holding off telephoning their GPs, resulting in a delay of investigation. It is vital that people with potential symptoms of lung cancer do not delay contacting their GP.

¹ National Cancer Registry Ireland. Survival statistics: NCRI; I [Internet]. [cited 2020 12/08/2020]. Available from <https://www.ncri.ie/data/survival-statistics>.



What can we do

Community health professionals have an important role, as the public engage and listen to you. Listening to someone's concerns about their health, supporting and validating their decision to seek help for their symptoms will encourage them to telephone their GP for assessment and increase the potential for lung cancer to be identified at an early stage. A word of encouragement from you might be all it takes to help them take that first step and talk to their GP about their concerns. You could make a huge difference to someone's life.

Be vigilant for the person who is at high-risk of lung cancer and, if they tell of you a symptom that is not normal for them. If someone tells you of a symptom that is not normal for them advise them to telephone their GP.

Public Awareness

Over the coming months, public awareness campaigns will be run by the NCCP and partners, to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of lung cancer.

Tailored lung cancer online education sessions or material for staff publications can be provided.

Please contact prevention@cancercontrol.ie for further information.

Resources for your use

- [Infographic](#)
- [Slide for education sessions](#)




Think Lung

You can help. Assure someone their health matters and to talk to their GP about any concerns they may have about symptoms that are not normal for them. Think L.U.N.G.

- L**isten to a person's concerns. Symptoms that they 'play down' as small or unimportant may in fact be symptoms of lung cancer.
- U**nderstand that a person may feel ashamed that they smoke and may be too embarrassed to talk about breathing symptoms.
- N**ote symptoms that are not normal for someone. Have them write these down and contact their GP to discuss.
- G**ive a person encouragement to contact their GP, especially if symptoms persist after a first GP visit. It's important to validate health-seeking behaviour, especially in people at increased risk of lung cancer.




Detect Lung Cancer early

While anybody can develop lung cancer some people are more at risk. Signs of lung cancer can be spotted. Watch out for the person who is at increased risk and shows potential early signs.

Signs of lung cancer	Who is at risk
C onstant or Changing Cough	Male and female. Older age, usually greater than 50 years old
A ppetite loss/weight loss	Smoker, ex-smoker or exposed to smoke
N ew cough	Socio-economically deprived
C hest or shoulder pain	Radiation exposure, for example living in area with high radon.
E asily breathless	
R eally tired	

Encourage someone to ring their GP if they are worried about any symptom which is unusual for them.