



LUNG CANCER PREVENTION AND SCREENING

Cancer Prevention Series 6

Lung cancer is a malignant tumour which results from abnormal growth of lung cells. It is the commonest cancer among men in Hong Kong.

Am I at risk of lung cancer?

Major risk factors to lung cancer include:

- Smoking or inhaling second hand smoke
- Air pollution (indoor and outdoor)
- Occupational exposure to certain chemicals or building materials (e.g. asbestos, nickel, uranium, chromium, arsenic etc.)
- Exposure to radon gas (a kind of radioactive gas that is released from rocks and soil and accumulates in the buildings)
- Radiation exposure
- Family history of lung cancer
- Weaker immunity, such as being infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

What are the common symptoms of lung cancer?

The symptoms of lung cancer may not be easily noticed at an early stage.

Common symptoms of lung cancer include:

- A persistent cough
- Coughing up blood-stained sputum
- Repeated chest infections
- Hoarseness
- Chest discomfort
- Chest pain when coughing or taking a deep breath
- Loss of weight

You should see a doctor as soon as possible if you develop any of the above symptoms.

How to reduce the chance of getting lung cancer?

- Avoid smoking and second hand smoke



- Observe occupational safety and health rules including proper use of protective equipment to reduce exposure to carcinogenic substances in workplaces

What is lung cancer screening?

The purpose of lung cancer screening is to detect lung cancer before it gives rise to symptoms, so that early treatment can be initiated.

Common lung cancer screening tests include:

- **Chest X-ray**
- **Sputum cytology**
- **Low-dose computed tomography**
 - use low-dose radiation to make detailed images of body organs by a computer linked to a X-ray machine

All screening tests have their limitations and they are not 100% accurate.

Should I screen for lung cancer?

For general or high risk population, routine screening with chest X-ray or sputum cytology is not recommended.

There is insufficient evidence to recommend for or against lung cancer screening by low-dose computed tomography in asymptomatic persons or as mass screening.

Smoking is major risk factor for lung cancer. If you are a smoker, please consider to quit smoking and consult the doctor about your screening need.



Department of Health