



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?

Risk factors for lung cancer include:

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

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

You should consult 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



- Adhering to occupational safety and health rules (e.g. proper use of protective equipment) to minimise 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 (LDCT)**
 - 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. Individuals who consider lung cancer screening should be adequately informed about the benefits and risks.

Should I get screened?

For general or high risk population -

- Routine screening for lung cancer with chest X-ray or sputum cytology is not recommended.
- There is insufficient evidence to recommend for or against lung cancer screening by LDCT in asymptomatic persons or as mass screening.

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



Department of Health