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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Your Guide to Lung Cancer Screening

## The MSK Promise

When you have a lung cancer screening at MSK, you will meet with a specialist on the thoracic (lung) team. Then, you will have a low-dose CT scan. You will be able to join our smoking cessation program, get educational information, and learn about getting involved in research.

## Meet Our Experts

- **Bernard Park, MD**  
Surgeon  
Deputy Chief of Clinical Affairs, Thoracic Service
- **Michelle Ginsberg, MD**  
Radiologist  
Vice Chair for Education, Department of Radiology
- **Jamie Ostroff, PhD**  
Psychologist  
Chief, Behavioral Sciences Service; Director, Tobacco Treatment Program

## Getting Screened is Easy!

Lung cancer is the leading cause of deaths related to cancer in the United States. Each year, lung cancer causes more deaths than breast, prostate, and colorectal cancers combined.

By the time most people learn they have lung cancer, it's at an advanced stage. It's hard to cure, and surgery is not a treatment option.

Medical experts have looked at years of data to understand the best methods for lung cancer screening. These experts include researchers and members of the American Cancer Society, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, the American College of Chest Physicians, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Their research showed screening with a low-dose CT scan can help people at high risk for lung cancer. Screening helps lower the risk of dying from the disease. Screening sometimes can find cancer early, when it's easier to treat. Screening at MSK uses the lowest dose of radiation possible while still getting very accurate results.

## Clear the Air

It's never too late to quit! Quitting today will help lower your risk of getting diseases related to smoking. We know it can be hard to quit smoking and not start again. MSK can help you do it, with the right advice and support.

## Tobacco Treatment Program At MSK

MSK has specialists who can help you quit smoking. Our program is open to all smokers and other tobacco users. We can help people who have never had cancer or a disease related to tobacco. We can help people who have cancer, and cancer survivors. It does not matter if you don't feel ready to quit yet. Using methods we know work well, we can help you safely cut down on smoking as you get ready to quit.

We offer treatment that's convenient and comfortable for you:

- By telephone
- In person
- In groups
- Through telemedicine (video)

For more information about our Tobacco Treatment Program, call 212-610-0507.

# MSK's Screening Guidelines for Lung Cancer

MSK follows the latest recommendation for lung cancer screening from the American Cancer Society. The type of screening you have and your screening schedule are based on your personal risk for lung cancer.

MSK recommends you get screened every year if you are between the ages of 50 and 80 and:

- Smoke now or used to smoke.
- Have smoked an average of 1 pack a day for 20 years or what comes out as the same number of cigarettes. For example, you could have smoked 2 packs a day for 10 years or a half pack a day for 40 years.

MSK generally recommends that you do not get screened if you have a disease or illness so severe that it would be very hard for you to have more testing and treatment.

If you would like to schedule a screening visit, call 646-497-9163.

If you have any concerns about your lung health, we encourage you to talk with your primary care doctor.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a low-dose CT?

It is a test that uses X-rays to make detailed pictures of the inside of the body. During the test, you will lie on your back on a table that is attached to an X-ray machine. The CT scanner is a large doughnut-shaped machine open on both ends. Your head and the lower part of your body are outside the machine. X-rays pass through your chest and lung areas. A computer saves all the pictures the machine takes so a doctor can review them.

## **I already spoke with my doctor about lung screening. Do I still need to meet with someone at MSK before having a low-dose CT?**

MSK is responsible for deciding if a lung screening is right for you. We will talk with you about the possible reasons for and against getting screened. To become part of our screening program, you must first meet with a thoracic specialist. Next, you will have a low-dose CT scan. We will follow up with your results in 1 business day.

## **I'm having symptoms. Can I still meet with an MSK care team for a lung cancer screening?**

We suggest you talk with a healthcare provider about those signs. We want to be sure they are reviewed right away, and by the right kind of provider. Possible signs of lung cancer can include chest pain, shortness of breath, or fatigue (feeling very tired). They include coughing up phlegm, mucus, or blood. However, these also can be signs of an infection, seasonal allergies, or another illness that isn't cancer.

If you have questions about your symptoms, call 646-497-9163 to talk with a care adviser.

## **I'm under age 50 but concerned about my lung health. Can I come in for a screening anyway?**

We understand your concerns, even if you may not meet the lung screening guidelines of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. You can call our project coordinator at 646-668-0254 to discuss your options.

## **Questions? Contact Us!**

Schedule a screening:

646-497-9163

Visit us online:

[mskcc.org/lungscreening](https://mskcc.org/lungscreening)

If you have questions or concerns, call the project coordinator for lung cancer screening at 646-668-0254.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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