

Taking Care of Your Lung Health

Lung cancer is one of the four most common cancers in Nova Scotia. Often, it is diagnosed at a late stage after the cancer has spread. This makes treatment difficult. When lung cancer is diagnosed early, it can often be cured.

There are many things you can do to take care of your lung health:

- If you smoke, quit smoking. Smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer. This includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and cannabis. The good news is that it is never too late to benefit from quitting smoking. There is also support for anyone who wants to try to quit smoking.
 - › Learn more at <https://tobaccofree.novascotia.ca>
- If you do not smoke, do not start. Commercial tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco) is an addictive substance, and it is hard to quit smoking.
- Avoid areas where you will be breathing second-hand smoke.
- Test your home for radon gas. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas in the ground. It has no smell or taste and is invisible. Radon can get into homes and buildings through cracks and holes. Over time, breathing in high levels of radon can cause lung cancer. There are tests that can measure the amount of radon in your home. If a test shows high levels of radon, there are companies who can do work to lower the levels of radon.
 - › Learn more at <https://novascotia.ca/nse/environmental-health/radon.asp>
- Take part in the Lung Screening Program if you qualify.
- Know your family medical history. Not all people who smoke will develop lung cancer. Many factors, such as genetics and other lifestyle habits, can also influence a person's risk.
- Be physically active. This lowers the risk of many cancers. It may lower lung cancer risk. Even small amounts of physical activity are helpful.

Below are some warning signs and symptoms of lung cancer. Talk to your health care provider, go to a walk-in clinic, or contact Virtual Care NS if you have any of these warnings and they do not go away after a couple of weeks.

› Learn more at <https://www.nshealth.ca/content/virtualcarens>

Possible signs and symptoms of lung cancer:

- A cough that does not get better
- Coughing up blood / spitting up blood (even a small amount)
- Chest pain
- Hoarse voice that does not improve
- Losing weight (without trying to lose weight)
- Being tired or weak for no reason
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Many chest infections
- Bone pain

Patient and family feedback is very important to us.

We would like to invite you to send any comments or suggestions on how to improve this booklet to education.cancercare@nshealth.ca or feel free to call us at 1-866-599-2267.

Looking for more health information?

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/cancer>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only.

It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.