

# About Lung Cancer



## Risk Factors

- **Smoking**
- **Exposure to secondhand smoke**
- **Exposure to environmental hazards like:**
  - **radon**
  - **asbestos**
  - **coal dust**
  - **other toxic substances such as arsenic or diesel exhaust**
- **Family history of lung cancer**
- **Radiation therapy to the chest**

Lung cancer refers to any cancer that forms in the tissues of the bronchus or lung. Lung cancers are usually grouped into two main types: small cell and non-small cell, and differ in how fast they grow and how they are treated.

## Lung Cancer in North Carolina

Lung cancer was the leading cause of cancer deaths in North Carolina in 2012 (29.6%). It has been the leading cause of cancer deaths in North Carolina for over two decades. It was estimated that 8,624 people in North Carolina would be diagnosed with lung cancer and 6,180 people in North Carolina would die from lung cancer in 2014.<sup>1</sup>

The American Cancer Society reports that lung cancer death rates began declining in 1991 for men and in 2003 for women, and reflects the change in smoking patterns over the past 50 years.<sup>2</sup>

## Prevention

Lung cancer is mostly preventable by not smoking and by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, radon and other environmental hazards.

## Signs and Symptoms of Lung Cancer

- Coughing that gets worse or doesn't go away
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Coughing up blood
- Feeling extremely fatigued
- Sudden weight loss

If you have any of these signs or symptoms and have questions about lung cancer, contact your healthcare provider for an appointment.

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<sup>1</sup> State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. North Carolina Central Cancer Registry. *Statistics and Reports: Cancer*. <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/data/cancer.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2014*. <http://www.cancer.org>