

Did you know that lung cancer is the leading cancer killer of both men and women in the United States? In fact, lung cancer claims more lives each year than colon, ovarian, lymph, breast and prostate cancers combined. This year more than 220,000 people will be diagnosed with the disease and more than 155,000 will die. November is National Lung Cancer Awareness Month, so it's a great time to learn the facts about lung cancer and what you can do to lower your risk or help someone else lower theirs.

What Causes Lung Cancer?

A number of factors can increase your risk for developing lung cancer. The majority of lung cancer cases are caused by smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke. Unlike other cancers, there is the perception that all people with lung cancer are smokers and somehow brought it on themselves. It is true that the leading risk factor for lung cancer is smoking, but no one deserves to get cancer. Smoking is not the only cause, other risks for lung cancer include:

- Exposure to radon.
- Exposure to asbestos and other chemicals
- Family history of lung cancer
- Excessive alcohol intake

Reducing Your Risk

If you don't already smoke cigarettes, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting is the single greatest thing you can do to reduce your risk for developing lung cancer. But quitting can be challenging. To improve your chances for success, it's important to have a plan. Try using the S.T.A.R.T. acronym to help.

Set a quit date – Setting a date to quit is an important step in becoming tobacco free because it gives you the necessary time to plan and prepare.

Tell others – Inform family, friends and coworkers of your quit date and about your plan and efforts to quit. Ask for their support and motivation.

Anticipate and plan for challenges – There are countless variables that come into play when trying to quit using tobacco. It could be anything from a spouse who smokes or friends who aren't supportive of your efforts, to really strong ties to smoking while doing daily activities, such as driving or relaxing after a meal. The good news is there are strategies for handling these and many other situations that can make quitting difficult.

Remove temptations – Take the time to remove all tobacco-related products from your home, car and office. This means getting rid of all ash trays, cigarette lighters and any other items that may remind you of the habit you are working to quit.



HealthBreak

Talk to your doctor – When it comes to quitting tobacco, you have options. You could choose to go cold turkey or use prescription medication or nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Talk to your doctor to find out which option is best for you.

Radon and Lung Cancer

Radon is a gas released from the normal decay of uranium in the soil. It is an invisible, colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that seeps from the ground and into the air. Radon is present in nearly all air and everyone breathes in radon every day. However, there are some places where radon gas is released at unusually high levels. Overtime, inhaling radon at high levels can cause lung cancer. In fact, scientists estimate that approximately 15,000 to 22,000 lung cancer deaths per year are related to radon. It can enter homes through cracks in floors, walls or foundations and collect indoors. Testing is the only way to know if your home has elevated radon levels. Because levels of this gas can vary from day to day and month to month, a long term test is a better indicator. Most test kits cost less than \$20.00.

Many factors can influence the risk of developing lung cancer. Some of them cannot be changed but many of them are within your control. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, seek help to quit now and avoid secondhand smoke. Test your home for radon and avoid breathing toxic chemicals at work.



Contact a Health Coach at 866-564-5237 or visit www.GetHealthyTools.com for more information about lifestyle changes you can make to improve your health.