



Ontario Lung Screening Program

This handout offers you information on the Ontario Lung Screening Program (OLSP). Regular lung screening is recommended for people at high risk of lung cancer. It can find lung cancer early when treatment has a better chance of working.

You may be at high risk of lung cancer and qualify for lung screening if you:

- Are 55 to 74 years of age and,
- Regularly smoked cigarettes for many years.

Lung screening

If you qualify for lung screening, you will be offered a test called a “low-dose CT scan”.

During a low-dose CT scan, you lie on an open table that passes through a large donut – shaped machine called a “scanner”. The scanner uses a small amount of radiation to take detailed pictures of your lungs. The test is not painful and only takes a few minutes. No medications or needles are given to you for this test.



The low-dose CT scan looks for lung nodules (spots on your lungs). The test can see the nodules but cannot tell if they are cancer. Nodules can be caused by cancer, infections, scar tissue or other conditions. Most nodules are not cancer. Lung cancer usually grows from a lung nodule. Lung nodules found during screening should be watched to see if they change or get bigger. More testing is needed to decide if a nodule is cancer.

The doctor who looks at the results of your low-dose CT scan will give it a score. This score is based on the size of the nodule and what it looks like. This is called a “scan score”. Your scan score tells us when you should have your next low-dose CT scan or if other tests are needed. We will call you about 1 week after your low-dose CT scan with this information.

A low-dose CT scan also takes pictures of the body parts near your lungs. This includes your heart, bones, kidneys, liver, and thyroid. We will send the results to the doctor who referred you to the OLSP. This doctor is responsible for ordering more tests if anything abnormal is found in other body parts.

The table below shows you what the scan scores mean and the recommended next steps.

Scan Score	What it means	Next step
1	Your scan did not show any nodules or nodules that need follow-up.	Your next low-dose CT scan will be in 12 months.
2	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules with a very low chance of being or becoming cancer.	Your next low-dose CT scan will be in 12 months.
3	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules with a low chance of being or becoming cancer.	Your next low-dose CT scan will be in 6 months to see if the nodules have changed.
4A	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that might have a chance of being or becoming cancer.	Your next low-dose CT scan will be in 3 months to see if the nodules have changed.
4B	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that need more testing.	You will be sent for more testing.
	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that were not on your last scan and might need more testing.	Your next low-dose CT scan will be in 1 month to see if the nodules have changed.
4X	Your scan showed 1 or more nodules that need more testing.	You will be sent for more testing.

Next step(s)

If your next step is another low-dose CT scan

The lung screening team will give you the appointment information for your next low-dose CT scan. It is important you have this low-dose CT scan. Screening works best if you are tested regularly.

If your next step is to have more testing

Someone from the Thoracic (lung) Diagnostic Assessment Program (DAP) will call you to talk about the tests you need to have.

Being sent for more tests does not mean you have lung cancer. If you are diagnosed with lung cancer, the Thoracic DAP team will talk to you about treatment options and help you decide what is best for you.

Risks of lung screening

Lung screening tests are not perfect and can have risks. It is important you understand these risks:

- You are exposed to a small amount of radiation when you have a low-dose CT scan. There is a small chance the extra radiation from many low-dose CT scans over time could cause cancer. The benefits of finding cancer early are greater than the risk of getting a small amount of radiation from a low-dose CT scan.
- You may have a lung cancer that is not found with the low-dose CT scan.
- The low-dose CT scan may offer false results.
- A lung cancer may grow between your scheduled low-dose CT scans.
- Lung screening may find a slow growing cancer that may never make you sick or cause you any harm. It is not always possible to tell which cancers are more harmful.
- Not all lung cancers found by a low-dose CT scan are caught early enough. Lung cancer may have already spread to other parts of your body or be hard to treat.

If you have questions or concerns

Talk to your doctor/nurse practitioner or the screening navigator from the OLSP if you have questions or concerns about any of the information in this handout. You can call the screening navigator at 905-576-8711 extension 34888 from 8 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday (except on holidays).

Help to quit smoking

People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk of getting disease, including cancer, and dying early. Go to our webpage at hrlung.ca for more information. You can also ask the screening navigator for a handout with this information.

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