



HEALTH AWARENESS

Lung Cancer: What Women Need To Know

(NAPSA)—There's encouraging news for women in the fight against lung cancer. Although the incidence of lung cancer in women increased rapidly after World War II as more women began to smoke, that trend may finally be reversing. Recent studies show that lung cancer cases in women have leveled off for the first time.

However, according to the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC), raising awareness of the disease and its causes remain urgent. Despite the downward trend, lung cancer is still the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in men and women in the U.S. Lung cancer accounts for one in every four cancer deaths and one of every eight newly diagnosed cancers in women. Altogether, 173,000 Americans are diagnosed each year.

According to a new NWHRC report, *Lung Cancer: What You Need to Know*, women who smoke are 12 times more likely to get lung cancer than those who don't, yet more than one in five women continue to smoke.

Of the two main types of lung cancer, non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and small cell lung cancer (SCLC), women who smoke are more likely to be diagnosed with SCLC, the more aggressive form.

Smoking cigarettes, cigars and pipes remains the leading cause of lung cancer, accounting for nearly nine out of 10 cases.

However, you don't have to smoke to get lung cancer. Breathing other people's smoke can also affect you. Studies show spouses of smokers have a 20 to 30 percent greater chance of developing the disease than those of nonsmokers. Other causes include exposure to harmful substances in the home or workplace, such as radon or asbestos, and some people seem to be more vulnerable.



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Quitting smoking at any age reduces the risk but the degree of risk depends on the length of time since quitting and how heavily the person smoked. Aside from quitting or never starting to smoke, people can minimize their risks by reducing exposure to harmful substances. A small percentage of people may be genetically susceptible to lung cancer.

Symptoms include a persistent cough, blood-stained phlegm or spit, shortness of breath, chest pain, recurring pneumonia or bronchitis, loss of appetite or unexplained weight loss.

Recent advances in lung cancer treatment have contributed to improved patient survival and quality of life.

Treatments may include surgery to remove the cancer, radiation to kill or shrink cancer cells, chemotherapy and newer targeted therapies or a combination of these treatments.

For more information about lung cancer and women, or to order a free copy of the NWHRC report on lung cancer, visit www.healthywomen.org.