



Questions To Ask

What should I ask my doctor?

Thinking about lung cancer brings up many questions. Sometimes it is difficult to keep all of your questions straight. Many patients have topics in mind they want to discuss with their doctor, but find they leave appointments without getting their questions answered.

The sample questions below are meant to serve as a guide to conversations between you and members of your care team. You will find that your doctor is the best person to answer some questions, but other members of your care team like a nurse or social worker, might be able to answer other questions. Only ask the questions you want to ask, when you are ready to ask them.

Printing these questions and taking them with you to your appointments, will help you stay organized and make sure all the questions you want to ask get answered.

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Questions About Lung Cancer Risk

Lung cancer may be a concern for you. Your doctor can answer your questions and help you decide if you need to take action to reduce your risk.

Should I be concerned about lung cancer?

☐

I am a smoker

☐

I was a smoker

☐

It runs in my family

☐

I'm worried.

Should I be screened for lung cancer?

What are the risks and benefits?

How much will it cost?

What can I do to reduce my risk of lung cancer?

How can I get help quitting smoking?

How can I avoid other risks?



Questions About Lung Cancer Diagnosis

You may have questions about how lung cancer is diagnosed. Your doctor can help you prepare for the medical tests. Here are some questions to ask your doctor for information about tests.

Which procedure will be used to diagnose me?

How will the tissue be removed?

Are there any risks?

How long will it take? Will I be awake? Will it hurt?

Will I have to stay in the hospital? If so, for how long?

Will I have to do anything to prepare for it?

How long will it take me to recover?

After your tests

Now that you are waiting for the results of those tests to come back, you can ask these questions.

How soon will I know the results?



Who will explain them to me?

If I do have cancer, who will talk to me about next steps?

When you have a diagnosis (hear what is wrong with you)

Once you are diagnosed, answers to these questions will help you know what type of lung cancer you have.

What type of lung cancer do I have?

What stage is my lung cancer?

If my cancer has spread, where else is it in my body?

Do I need more tests?

Can we make arrangements to have my tumour tested using comprehensive genomic testing?

Are there any molecular markers in my tumour?

Can you explain my prognosis (what may happen to me)?



Questions About Treatment Decisions

You can talk to your care team and work out what you want the treatment to do and your options. Asking these questions will help you think about your next move:

What are my treatment options?

What type of treatment do you recommend for me and why?

What new treatments exist and can I get them?

Can I get targeted therapies?

Are there any clinical trials that are right for me?

If so, how do I get more information?

What are the risks and benefits of the treatment options?

What is the goal of the treatment?



How quickly do we need to decide on treatment?

Can I change my treatments dates so I can take part in an event?

Can I start having palliative care as soon as I begin treatment to improve my quality of life?

Is there a treatment that would be offered to a patient with my lung cancer in another country, i.e. is not available in New Zealand yet?

Is there a treatment that is not funded in the public system in New Zealand that might be available by my specialist applying for it under exceptional circumstances, or if I self-fund it?

Additional questions



Questions About Managing Treatment

Treatment brings up many concerns. Getting answers to these questions can help you feel prepared to manage your treatment.

When do I start treatment?

How long will it last?

How often will I get it?

What should I do to be ready for treatment?

What are the possible side effects from my treatments and how can I manage them?

How do I get support or palliative care to help me with any side effects?

If I have questions during my treatment and my doctor is not available, who can I ask?

Who should I call in case of an emergency?



What should I do to stay healthy during treatment?

What would we do if the treatment doesn't work or if the cancer comes back?

What type of follow-up will I need after treatment?

What psychological and other support is available to me and my whānau to help us cope with this cancer journey?

Additional questions



Questions About Taking Care of Myself

Take care of yourself physically and emotionally. Talking to your doctor about these topics will help you stay as healthy as possible during this time.

Support in your area

Where can I get more information about lung cancer?

Do you have a social worker or cancer nurse that can help me? Or can you refer me to one?

Where can I get treatment-related help such as wigs or transportation to appointments?

Where can I get financial help?

Are there support groups available for my loved ones and me?

Eating good food

Should I change what I eat?

Should I take a dietary supplement?

Can taking dietary supplements interfere with my cancer treatment?



What should I eat to help with my symptoms?

Being active

Is it safe for me to exercise?

What type of exercise should I be doing?

How often should I exercise?

Do you have any tips for staying active even if I feel tired?

Who can I go to for help with physical activity?

Do you recommend I see a physiotherapist?

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

What type of complementary treatment will help me deal with cancer symptoms or side effects?



Will it interfere with my treatment or medicines?

Can you suggest a CAM practitioner for me to talk to?

Will you work with my CAM practitioner?

Additional questions



Questions For Your Care Team About Life Planning

It is never too soon to start talking about life plans. The questions below are a guide. Only ask the questions you want to ask, when you are ready to ask them. You might want to start with listing upcoming events that you are looking forward to such as a wedding, graduation, holiday or travel. Then talk to your doctors about your plans.

Event:

Date:

Goal:

Here's an example:

Event:

Granddaughter's wedding

Date:

May 25

Goal:

To be well enough to travel to the wedding.

How do I tell other people that I have lung cancer?

Is it okay to tell children?

How do I tell my employer?



Will I always have to worry about the cancer coming back?

Can I keep working?

Can I still be intimate (have sex) with my partner?

What do I need to plan?

How can I make sure my family is taken care of?

How do I go about writing a will and an advance care plan?

Who do I talk to about my medical care in the future if I am no longer able to speak for myself?

Additional questions



Other Questions

Will I be in pain? If I am, what can you do to help me?

Do I have to worry about being addicted to pain medication?

What do I need to know about palliative or supportive care?

How do I know when to stop treatment?

What if I want to stop treatment, but my family doesn't agree?

What can I expect in the last days of my life?

What do I need to know about hospice care?

Will you be able to tell me when it is getting close to the time I will die?

Additional questions

About Lung Foundation New Zealand

Lung Foundation New Zealand is a non-government organisation dedicated to promoting healthy lungs and early detection of lung disease (including lung cancer, New Zealand's biggest cancer killer). The Lung Foundation is devoted to supporting people affected by lung disease and provides a voice for patients and their families.

Lung Foundation New Zealand advocates on a range of issues, including access to more effective funded treatments, an increase in research funding and a commitment to making Aotearoa a smoke free nation by 2025.

Support us

Lung Foundation New Zealand is an independent organisation and is reliant on support from fundraising events, donations and bequests. This resource has been produced as the result of generous support provided by members of the public.

If you or a member of your family would like to support our work we would love to hear from you. Together we can save lives by increasing awareness about lung health and early detection of lung disease. Please visit our website www.lungfoundation.org.nz or contact Philip Hope, CEO on (+64) 021 959 450 or philip.hope@lungfoundation.org.nz

Connect with us on Facebook - fb.me/LungFoundationNZ

Expert Review Policy: Our information was checked for accuracy and clarity by cancer specialists. This resource has been approved by Medical Director & Associate Professor of Oncology, Chris Atkinson of Christchurch; assisted by Dr Greg Frazer, Respiratory Physician, Christchurch Hospital; Catherine Smith, Clinical Nurse Specialist - Lung Cancer, Christchurch Hospital; and Anne Fraser, Oncology Nurse Practitioner, Auckland City Hospital. Lung Foundation New Zealand writes in plain English. We review our information every two years so it is kept up to date.

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