



Lung Cancer Fact Sheet, 2021

Lung cancer continues to be one of the most common cancers worldwide, claiming more lives yearly than breast, colon, and prostate cancers combined. World Lung Cancer Day is a great opportunity for us all to raise awareness about lung cancer, highlighting the key risk factors as well as screening and treatment options.

- Lung cancer is by far the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women, making up almost 25% of all cancer deaths. Each year, more people die of lung cancer than of colon, breast, and prostate cancers combined.
- Worldwide in 2020, there were 2.21 million new cases of lung cancer and 1.80 million deaths from lung cancer.
- Lung cancer has the lowest 5-year survival rate at only 18% compared to breast at 90%, prostate at 99%, and colorectal at 65%.
- The 5-year survival rate for lung cancer drops dramatically from a stage 1 diagnosis (68-92% survival) to a stage 4 diagnosis (0-10% survival).
- Only 16% of the eligible population will be diagnosed at an early stage when lung cancer is when the disease is most likely to be cured.
- Lung cancer mainly occurs in older people. Most people diagnosed with lung cancer are 65 or older; a very small number of people diagnosed are younger than 45. The average age of people when diagnosed is about 70.
- Approximately 6.1 percent of men and women will be diagnosed with lung and bronchus cancer at some point during their lifetime, based on 2016–2018 data.
- Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure causes an estimated 3% of all lung cancer deaths, which is the equivalent of 3,590 deaths in 2021.
- People who successfully quit smoking can add as much as a decade of life expectancy and reduce their risk of lung cancer by half after quitting for 10-15 years compared to people who continue to smoke.

- Other than tobacco use, lung cancer risk factors include passive exposure to tobacco smoke, biomass fuel, diesel exhaust, radon, asbestos, and other environmental and workplace carcinogens.

Sources:

<https://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/lungb.html>

https://www.firsnet.org/images/publications/The_Global_Impact_of_Respiratory_Disease.pdf

<https://gco.iarc.fr/today/data/pdf/fact-sheets/cancers/cancer-fact-sheets-11.pdf>

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/lung-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>

<https://go2foundation.org/risk-early-detection/screening-facts-figures/>

<https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/cancer-prevention-and-early-detection-facts-and-figures/2021-cancer-prevention-and-early-detection.pdf>

About FIRS

[The Forum of International Respiratory Societies](#) (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health globally: [American College of Chest Physicians](#) (CHEST), [American Thoracic Society](#) (ATS), [Asian Pacific Society of Respirology](#) (APSR), [Asociación Latino Americana De Tórax](#) (ALAT), [European Respiratory Society](#) (ERS), [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases](#) (The Union), [Pan African Thoracic Society](#) (PATS), [Global Initiative for Asthma](#) (GINA) and the [Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease](#) (GOLD).

The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

Get Involved

Help spread the message about lung cancer:

- Tweet including @accpchest and #WorldLungCancerDay
- Save and share these images on social media:

Only 5% of eligible individuals were screened for lung cancer in 2020

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Forum of International Respiratory Societies
United for Lung Health

CHEST®

6% of the population will be diagnosed with lung cancer at some point during their lifetime

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25% of cancer deaths are from lung cancer

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