Frequently asked questions

1. **Why screen if I feel well?** Lung cancer often has no early symptoms. Lung cancer screening helps find lung cancer early before you feel unwell.
2. **What if I feel anxious about my scan?** Bring a support person and ask staff to explain each step.
3. **What if I don't have a regular GP?** Visit a bulk-billing clinic, nurse practitioner or Aboriginal community-controlled health service.
4. **Smoke cannabis, chop-chop or vape?** Eligibility is based on tobacco cigarettes only. This includes packaged cigarettes and roll-your-own cigarettes (rollies) and does not include other tobacco products.

   A GP or nurse practitioner can help you access support to cut down or quit if you smoke cigarettes, cannabis, vape or chop-chop. You do not have to quit to participate in the program.
5. **Worried about the results of the scan?** Talk to a GP, nurse practitioner, support service or call a helpline.
6. **Have symptoms?** Don't wait for lung cancer screening, see a GP or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.
7. **Will I get reminders?** Yes, the NCSR will send reminders when your next scan is due. If you are not enrolled, a GP or nurse practitioner may also provide reminders or follow-ups.
8. **Is my information private?** Ask a GP or nurse practitioner to explain how your privacy is protected.

Australian Government

NATIONAL LUNG CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

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Scan the QR code for more information about the National Lung Cancer Screening Program or visit www.health.gov.au/nlcsp

Support services

National Cancer Screening Register
1800 627 701

Lung Cancer Screening Helpline
1800 654 301

Quitline
13 78 48

13YARN (First Nations)
13 92 76

Cancer Council Support
13 11 20

Lifeline
13 11 14

NATIONAL LUNG CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM



Quick guide

For people living with mental health challenges accessing the National Lung Cancer Screening Program

What is lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer screening uses a low-dose CT scan. It is a quick and painless scan that checks your lungs for early signs of cancer before you feel unwell. It takes detailed pictures of your lungs to find changes early, when treatment works best.

Eligibility

You are eligible if you:

- are 50 to 70 years old
- smoke tobacco cigarettes now or have quit in the past 10 years
- have a history of tobacco cigarette smoking of at least 30-pack years (for example, 20 cigarettes a day over 30 years, or up to 40 cigarettes a day over 15 years)
- have no symptoms of lung cancer.

A GP or nurse practitioner will discuss your smoking history with you to confirm your eligibility.

Lung cancer screening is free with a referral and a green or blue Medicare card.

Why lung cancer screening matters

- Lung cancer screening can find changes early.
- Early detection means more treatment options and better outcomes.
- It's never too late to take action to improve your health.

Looking after your physical health supports your mental health

Before your scan

- Chat with a GP or nurse practitioner about eligibility. They will give you a referral if you are eligible.
- The GP, nurse practitioner or other clinic staff can help locate a participating radiology clinic.
- You or your support person will then need to contact the radiology clinic to book an appointment.
- You can tell the radiology clinic about any needs, worries or preferences you have.

On the day of the scan

- Tell the radiology clinic if you have sensory, mental health, cultural or physical needs.
- Tell staff if you feel anxious in medical settings, find noise, lights or enclosed spaces difficult.
- You may need to remove metal items or jewellery and may be asked to wear a gown.

During the scan

- You lie on a table that moves through a donut shaped scanner.
- You will be asked to lift your hands above your head (if you can).
- The scanner makes clicking whirring sounds. You may be asked to hold your breath briefly.
- The scan takes about 10 seconds and there are no needles and no pain.

You are in control

While it may not be available at all clinics, you can ask for:

- a support person or interpreter to attend
- a quiet waiting area
- extra time or grounding support if you need it
- plain-language explanations
- a preferred staff gender
- ear plugs (if allowed).

After your scan

- A radiologist reviews your scan. Most people have very low risk results.
- Results are sent to the National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR) and the GP or nurse practitioner who referred you.
- If you are enrolled with the National Cancer Screening Register, you will receive a notification (SMS or letter) with recommended next steps. Depending on your results, this may be having another low-dose CT scan in two years or discussing your results with the GP or nurse practitioner. If you are not enrolled, the GP or nurse practitioner who referred you will notify you of your screening results and any recommended next steps.



Your rights matter

You have the right to:

- receive clear information
- receive trauma-informed care
- receive culturally safe care
- ask for adjustments to help you feel more comfortable or that you might need
- have a support person attend appointments with you
- nominate a personal representative
- ask questions.