

# Targeted Lung Health Checks

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## What you need to know



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A Targeted Lung Health check is different to NHS health checks. Even if you've recently been for an NHS health check, you should still think about attending your Targeted Lung Health Check.

## What is a Targeted Lung Health Check?

A Targeted Lung Health check looks at the health of your lungs. It is done in two parts.



You will have a phone call or meeting with a health professional. They will ask you about your health. They will look at your risk of developing lung cancer. If you are at higher risk you will be invited for a lung scan.



The scan takes a detailed picture of your lungs. This will be looked at by experts in this area. If they find any problems you will be asked to come back for more treatment.

## Why are we offering Targeted Lung Health Checks?

It can be hard to spot lung cancer. There are often no signs of symptoms at an early stage. Around seven in ten cancer patients are diagnosed too late. This means there is less chance that treatment will make them better.

Targeted Lung Health Checks help find problems earlier. You might not even know there is anything wrong. It helps save lives. This is because treatment can start sooner. It is also more likely to work. Most lung cancers grow slowly. This means they can be found at an early stage by a lung scan.

## Why have you been invited?

If you're aged between 55 and 74 and have smoked, you have a higher risk of developing lung cancer. We want to check your lungs are working well. It's rare that any problems are found. If they are it means we can act quickly and provide treatment. You don't have to take part in the check, but it could be much better for your health if you do.

## What can you expect during the Targeted Lung Health Check?

We will contact you by letter and invite you to take part. This could be by telephone or face to face in the hospital. We will ask you some questions about your breathing, the health of your lungs, your lifestyle, family and medical history. All of this helps us to look at your risk of lung cancer.



- If there are no problems the check is over and you don't need to do anything else.
- If you have problems with your breathing or lungs, but don't need scan, we will refer you back to your GP.
- If you have a higher chance of developing lung cancer now or in the future you will be asked to come in for a scan. This is a special CT (Computer Tomography) scan that uses a very low dose of radiation and a computer to take a detailed picture of your lungs.

## What happens during a lung scan?



You will usually lie flat on your back on a bed that moves slowly through the CT scanner. The scanner is shaped like a ring and it rotates around a small section of your body as you pass through it. Specially-trained staff (called radiographers) control the scanner from behind a screen.

You will be able to see and speak to them during the scan. When a scan is taken, you will need to lie still.

You will be asked to follow simple breathing instructions for 10 seconds. This makes sure the pictures are not blurred. The scan is painless and you will be able to eat, drink and drive before and after your scan.

## Possible results

You will get your results within around four weeks.

### There are four possible results:

**No problems found** - This means we saw no signs of lung cancer, or other problems on the scan. We will write to you with the results and ask you to come back for another scan in two years. It is still possible that lung cancer could develop between scans or that the scan may have missed it. If you notice anything that is not normal for you before your next scan, speak to your GP straight away.

**Second scan needed** - This usually means there is something on the scan which is hard to identify. It is probably something harmless, but because it could be more serious we will ask you to come for another scan in around three months, just to check.

**Further tests needed** - This means we've seen something on the scan and you need further tests. This could include a biopsy - a small sample of cells that are looked at under a microscope.

**Another problem found** - This means there is no sign of lung cancer but there are signs of other problems on the scan that may need treatment or medical advice.

In all cases we will write to you and your GP with more information.

## Why spotting lung cancer early makes a difference

It's much easier to treat lung cancer at an early stage. It's also more likely to be successful. You are three times more likely to be diagnosed at an early stage with a lung scan. Small and early lung cancer can often be removed completely. This would be through an operation or radiotherapy. This is a treatment that uses radiation to kill cancer cells.

## What you need to know about lung scans

Research shows that a lung scan can help reduce your risk of dying from lung cancer by around 25%. The scan does carry a small amount of risk. It exposes you to low levels of radiation. The benefit of detecting early cancer far outweighs any risk.

A very small number of scans will not pick up cancer that is there. This is called a false negative. If you start to have symptoms at any time you need to see your GP.

Some scans pick up things which are not lung cancer. This is called a false positive. You may need to have further tests to rule out cancer altogether.

Scans can pick up lung cancers that will never cause any harm. It's hard to tell if cancer will go on to be life threatening. Some people may receive treatment that they do not need.

## What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer is one of the most common types of cancer. It happens when cells that are not normal divide to form a tumour in the lung.

In the early stages of lung cancer you may not have any signs and symptoms.

Most lung cancers grow slowly. This means they can be found early through a low dose CT scan.

## This is why we have set up the Targeted Lung Health Checks.

## What are the symptoms of lung cancer?

Lung cancer can develop at any time. It is important to look out for anything that is unusual for you. This includes:

- A cough that won't go away or a change in your normal cough.
- Coughing up blood.
- Shortness of breath.
- Being more tired than usual or losing weight without trying.
- Aches or pain when breathing or coughing.
- Not feeling hungry.

If you notice one or more of these symptoms, contact your GP straight away.

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

Stopping smoking can lower your risk of developing lung cancer. Lots of people who have smoked for years and tried to quit many times have successfully stopped smoking.

If you do smoke and would like to stop there is lots of free help and support out there.

You can speak to your GP or ask at your Targeted Lung Health Check. You can also contact your local stop smoking service direct contact details are on the next page.

## Stop Smoking Service South Tyneside

Change for Life Stop Smoking Service - South Tyneside Council

Telephone: 0191 424 7300

Email: [public.health@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:public.health@southtyneside.gov.uk)

## Stop Smoking Service Sunderland

Telephone: Freephone 0800 169 9913

Local Helpline: 0191 5671057

Facebook: Sunderland Specialist Stop Smoking Service

Twitter: @StopSmokingSun

Website: [www.northumbria.nhs.uk/stopsmoking/support-in-your-area/services-in-sunderland/](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/stopsmoking/support-in-your-area/services-in-sunderland/)

Email: [nhc-tr.sunderlandstopsmoking@nhs.net](mailto:nhc-tr.sunderlandstopsmoking@nhs.net)

## For more information about lung cancer, lung health checks and advice on smoking visit:

NHS Lung Cancer Information

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/lung-cancer/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lung-cancer/)

NHS Smokefree [www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)

Cancer Research UK

[www.cruk.org/lunghealthchecks](http://www.cruk.org/lunghealthchecks)

[www.cruk.org/about-cancer/lung-cancer](http://www.cruk.org/about-cancer/lung-cancer)

[www.cruk.org/smoking](http://www.cruk.org/smoking)

Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation

[www.roycastle.org/information](http://www.roycastle.org/information)

[www.roycastle.org/help-and-support](http://www.roycastle.org/help-and-support)

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This information can be made available in another format or language. To request this or for more information and support call the Targeted Lung Health Check Team on 0191 4041277 or email [stsft.stslunghealthcheck@nhs.net](mailto:stsft.stslunghealthcheck@nhs.net)