

## Treatment

The best chances of cure are found in patients who are diagnosed early, eligible for surgery and treated in the early stages of the disease (stages 1 and 2). It is therefore essential to be attentive to the changes and abnormal symptoms that you are experiencing. Smoking cessation remains the most important step in preventing lung cancer.

Lung cancer is often diagnosed late, making it difficult to treat. The treatment depends on several factors: the type of cancer or cell type, the clinical stage (extent of the disease) and the physiological state (age, lung function, general health, etc.) of the patient, in addition to his or her psychological state. The main treatments for lung cancer are surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and, more recently, targeted therapy and immunotherapy. Often referred to as "oral chemotherapy", targeted therapy can be taken in tablet form. Immunotherapy, on the other hand, is administered by injection or perfusion. Each treatment modality can be used alone or in combination with another. Other alternative treatments are sometimes used through research protocols or clinical trials. Ask your doctor for advice.

It is important to realize that the optimal suggested treatment is specific to each patient. It often depends on several factors, including a consensus reached after a discussion with a lung tumor committee made up of the various specialists involved, such as pneumologists, thoracic surgeons, oncologists, radiation oncologists and pathologists. In more advanced illnesses, supportive or palliative care is offered to the patient.

## Did You Know...

**THE QUEBEC LUNG ASSOCIATION (QLA) OFFERS ANNUALLY FOUR VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS FOCUSING ON WELL-BEING FOR PEOPLE WITH LUNG CANCER AND THEIR RELATIVES.**

**CONTACT US TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE DATES, TOPICS AND HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN UPCOMING WORKSHOPS.**

**THE QLA ALSO OFFERS AN INFORMATION LINE? YOU CAN CONTACT OUR TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY AT 1-888-POUMON-9 (1-888-768-6669). ALSO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [POUMONQUEBEC.CA/EN](http://POUMONQUEBEC.CA/EN).**

## Quebec Lung Association

The Quebec Lung Association (QLA) is the only non-profit organization promoting respiratory health and fighting lung disease through education, prevention, rehabilitation, support for the people affected and their families, as well as research on respiratory diseases. The QLA also addresses environmental factors that pose risks to respiratory health.

Through its work to improve the respiratory health of Quebecers and the living conditions of people suffering from respiratory illnesses, and by encouraging them to take charge of their health, the QLA acts directly on the condition of people of all ages, which has a direct impact on public health.

Contact us by calling  
**1 888 POUMON9 (1 888 768-6669)**  
or by emailing us  
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# LUNG CANCER



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## Lung cancer

In Quebec, approximately 8,000 people are diagnosed with lung cancer every year. Ninety-five percent of these new cases occur in people 50 years of age or older. This disease is unfortunately known for its low survival rate. Indeed, because diagnosis often comes late, and other chronic diseases are frequently present, patient management is difficult. Therefore, it is essential to raise public awareness of lung cancer.

The disease is caused by the chaotic development of abnormal cells in the lungs which no longer fulfill the functions of normal cells. In fact, as they multiply, the cancerous cells destroy healthy lung tissues and sometimes even invade blood vessels.

There are two major types of lung cancer :

- The most common, which is called “non-small cell” lung cancer, which usually progresses slower. It includes adenocarcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and large cell carcinoma.

- “Small cell” lung cancer is not as common and generally progresses faster. It is also treated differently.

A cancer that develops in another part of the body and then spreads to the lungs is not lung cancer, but rather lung metastases.

## TOBACCO IS THE MAIN CAUSE OF LUNG CANCER IN MORE THAN

# 85%

OF CASES.

## Causes

Tobacco is the main cause of lung cancer: 85% of cases would be caused by it. The duration of exposure as well as the number of cigarettes smoked are tobacco-related factors that can increase the risk of developing lung cancer.

Other factors are also associated with the risk of developing lung cancer, such as second-hand smoke, exposure to radon, asbestos, occupational exposure to carcinogenic substances (benzo(a)pyrenes, cadmium, arsenic...), outdoor air pollution, etc. Genetic background and personal predispositions also play an important role in the development of lung cancer.

## Signs and Symptoms

Lung cancer is an insidious disease: few symptoms are noticeable in the early stages of its development. Early detection, at a time when the cancer can be most easily cured, is therefore difficult. Initially, symptoms are not very apparent and depend on factors such as the size of the tumour and the area in which it is.

The most common symptom, and often the first to appear, is an unexplained cough. However, other symptoms can be associated with lung cancer :

- Constant chest pain, which intensifies when you take deep breaths ;
- Blood expectoration ;
- Shortness of breath ;
- Wheezing ;
- Change in voice (hoarseness) ;
- Weight and appetite loss ;
- Weakness and fatigue ;
- Recurrent lung infections.

These are non-specific symptoms that can also be associated with other diseases. A medical examination is essential in order to obtain the correct diagnosis.

## Diagnosis

Lung cancer is currently the most diagnosed form of cancer. A lung X-ray is often the first step of the diagnosis process. Subsequently, depending on the case, the doctor may suggest a chest CT scan, a PET scan (positron emission tomography), a bronchoscopy, an EBUS (endobronchial ultrasound), a transthoracic biopsy and even an exploratory lung surgery, in order to investigate and confirm lung cancer.

This process allows the doctor to confirm the presence of lung cancer, but also to assess its type and stage (on a scale of 1 to 4). In addition, certain tests carried out on cytological samples or lung biopsy will identify specific mutations in cancer cells that may have an impact on the suggested treatment plan (targeted therapy and immunotherapy).

**THE BEST CHANCES OF RECOVERY ARE FOUND IN PATIENTS WITH AN EARLY DIAGNOSIS. IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO BE ATTENTIVE TO THE CHANGES AND ABNORMAL SYMPTOMS THAT YOU ARE EXPERIENCING.**

