

Diagnosis

A chest X-ray is often the first test done. Depending on the situation, a clinician may also recommend a **chest CT scan**, a **PET scan**, a **bronchoscopy**, an **EBUS** (endobronchial ultrasound with sampling), a **transthoracic biopsy**, and sometimes exploratory surgery.

These tests help confirm lung cancer, determine the **type**, and establish the **stage** (how far the disease has spread, typically on a scale from 1 to 4). Testing on cell or tissue samples may also identify tumour features that guide treatment choices—especially for **targeted therapy** and **immunotherapy**.

Treatments

People whose lung cancer is found early, who are eligible for surgery, and who are treated at an early stage (stages 1 and 2) have the best chance of a cure. That's why it's important to pay attention to any new, persistent, or unusual symptoms. **Quitting smoking** is still the single most important step to reduce lung cancer risk.

Treatment is personalized and depends on:

- the type of lung cancer;
- the stage of the disease;
- specific tumour characteristics;
- the person's overall health.

Main treatment options

-**Surgery**: most often used when the cancer is detected early.

-**Chemotherapy**: medications that destroy cancer cells.

-**Immunotherapy**: helps the immune system recognize and attack cancer cells

-**Targeted therapy**: works against specific changes found in some tumours.

Treatments may be used alone or in combination, **before or after surgery**, or to **manage more advanced disease**.

DID YOU KNOW?

Each year, the Quebec Lung Association offers four online well-being workshops for people living with lung cancer and their loved ones.

Contact us to learn about upcoming dates, topics, and how to register.

The Quebec Lung Association also offers an information line. Reach our health professionals Monday to Friday at:

1-888-POUMON-9
(1-888-768-6669)

Website:
poumonquebec.ca



The Quebec Lung Association

The **Quebec Lung Association** is the only non-profit organization dedicated to improving respiratory health and reducing the impact of lung disease through prevention, education, pulmonary rehabilitation, direct support for people affected and their loved ones, and respiratory research. The organization also works to address environmental factors that can affect respiratory health.

The Quebec Lung Association contributes to public health across all ages by helping Quebecers improve their respiratory health and supporting people living with lung disease in taking an active role in their care.



LUNG CANCER

Lung cancer

In Quebec, about **10,000** people are diagnosed with lung cancer each year, and about **98%** of new cases occur in people aged 50 and over. Lung cancer is unfortunately associated with a low survival rate. This is partly because it is often diagnosed at a later stage and because many people also live with other chronic conditions. Increasing awareness remains essential.

Lung cancer develops when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably in the lungs. These cells no longer function normally. As they multiply, they can damage healthy lung tissue and, in some cases, spread through blood vessels.



There are two main types of lung cancer:

- **Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)**, which accounts for most cases.
- **Small cell lung cancer (SCLC)**, which is less common but usually more aggressive.

Prognosis depends on several factors, including the type of cancer, the stage at diagnosis, and the person's overall health.

In more than 72% of cases, smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer.

Causes

Smoking is the main risk factor for lung cancer. It is estimated to be the primary cause in **more than 72%** of cases. Risk increases with the number of cigarettes smoked and the length of time someone has smoked.

Other factors may also contribute, including second-hand smoke, exposure to radon and asbestos, certain workplace exposures to carcinogens (e.g., benzo[a]pyrene, cadmium, arsenic), and outdoor air pollution. Genetics and individual predispositions may also play a role.

DID YOU KNOW?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. It is invisible, odourless and can build up indoors.

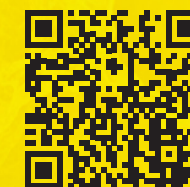
In Quebec, about **16%** of deaths from lung cancer are attributed to radon exposure, making it the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking.

Risk is even higher for people exposed to both radon and tobacco smoke.

Radon can be measured at home with a detector, and corrective measures can be taken if levels are high.

More information about radon testing—and where to find detectors—is available on our website.

Scan the QR code to learn more.



Signs and symptoms

Lung cancer often develops gradually. Early symptoms may be mild or absent, which can make early detection difficult. Symptoms vary depending on where the tumour is located and how large it is.

The most common—and often the first—symptom is a **persistent or unexplained cough**. Other possible symptoms include:

- Persistent chest pain, worse with deep breathing
- Coughing up blood
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Voice changes (hoarseness)
- Unintentional weight loss or loss of appetite
- Severe fatigue or weakness
- Recurrent lung infections

These symptoms are not specific to lung cancer and can be caused by other conditions. **A medical assessment is essential** to identify the cause.