

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, among both men and women. It claims more lives than colon, prostate and breast cancer combined. Yet lung cancer is also among the most preventable cancers. Smoking accounts for about 85 percent to 90 percent of lung cancer cases. Other causes include exposure to radon, asbestos and secondhand smoke.

Although the mortality rate from lung cancer has been declining for men, the rate for women has increased. Early detection and treatment make a difference in life expectancy following diagnosis. Treatment depends on the type of lung cancer, how far advanced the cancer is, and the patient's overall health.

**Small cell lung cancer (SCLC)** typically begins near the center of the chest, in the bronchi. These cancer cells are small, but can multiply quickly to form large tumors. Small-cell lung cancer is sometimes called oat cell cancer because of its oat grain-like shape.

**Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)** is comprised of three major subtypes, each with a unique size, shape and chemical make-up:

- **Adenocarcinoma** is generally found in the outer region of the lung. When it develops in the lung's alveoli (tiny lung sacs), it is referred to as bronchioalveolar adenocarcinoma.
- **Squamous carcinoma** is closely linked to cigarette smoking, and typically originates in the lung's large breathing tubes (bronchi).
- **Large cell carcinoma** usually begins growing in branches of the smaller breathing tubes (bronchioles) and may migrate towards an area behind the breastbone called the mediastinum. The mediastinum houses the esophagus, windpipe, bronchi and heart.

There are two major types of lung cancer: small cell and non-small cell - and different subtypes of non-small cell lung cancer. Each type grows and spreads in different ways, and is treated differently. Non-small cell is the most common form of lung cancer, growing and spreading more slowly than the small cell type, which is also known as oat cell cancer, due to its appearance under a microscope. Small cell lung cancer is more likely to spread to other organs in the body.

According to the National Cancer Institute, cancer of the lung and bronchus (hereafter, lung cancer) is the second most common cancer among both men and women, second only to colorectal cancer. Cigarette smoking accounts for nearly ninety percent of all lung cancers, and it is therefore the single most preventable cancer in existence. Quitting smoking is beneficial at all ages, and

the earlier in life one quits, the greater the benefits. One study estimated that men who quit smoking by age 50 reduced their risk of lung cancer by almost two-thirds, compared to men who continued to smoke at age 75.