Lung cancer causes more deaths in the U.S. than any other type of cancer. This is because early lung cancer often does not cause symptoms. By the time the cancer is found, it may not be curable. Lung cancer screening for patients who are at high risk can find cancer at an early stage, when it is more likely to be cured.

A recent nation-wide trial showed low-dose spiral computed tomography (LDCT) scans are better at finding early-stage lung cancer than chest x-rays. Screening with LDCT decreased the risk of dying from lung cancer.

**Who should be screened?**

Lung cancer screening isn't for everyone. Current guidelines from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network recommend screening for certain people at high risk:

- 55-74 years old
- **and** more than 30 pack-years of smoking
  (1 pack-year = 365 packs of cigarettes smoked, or 1 pack-year = packs smoked per day × number of years of smoking)
- **and** currently smoking or quit within the past 15 years

OR

- Over 50 years old
- **and** more than 20 pack-years of smoking
  (1 pack-year = 365 packs of cigarettes smoked, or 1 pack-year = packs smoked per day × number of years of smoking)
- **and** one or more of these additional risk factors:
  - Exposure to radon
  - Workplace exposure to chemicals
  - Family history of lung cancer
  - Disease history (COPD or pulmonary fibrosis)

Exposure to second-hand smoke is not considered a high risk factor at this time. Studies have not shown a strong link between second-hand smoke and lung cancer.

**How is the screening done?**

Screening is done with an LDCT scan. This scan is like a regular CT scan, but less radiation is used. People getting the scan don't need to drink a contrast liquid or get contrast in the vein.

**How often should the screening be done?**

If your scan shows a growth in your lungs, a doctor at Huntsman Cancer Institute will schedule an appointment to talk about the results. If no growth is found, you will receive a letter that gives you follow-up recommendations.

**What are the benefits of screening for lung cancer?**

When a patient has lung cancer, he or she has a better chance of surviving if the cancer is found early. Screening can find cancer at an earlier stage. Screening may also find diseases in the chest other than lung cancer that may need to be treated.

**What are the risks of screening?**

- LDCT scanning exposes you to radiation. The radiation dose from a LDCT scan equals about 10 chest x-rays.
- LDCT scans cannot tell the difference between cancer and non-cancerous growths in the lungs. In order to tell if a mass or growth is cancer or not, you may need more tests. This means you may be exposed to more radiation or invasive tests.
- LDCT scans may not find cancer growths that are there.
- Not all lung cancers are the same. Some slow-growing cancers may never result in death. Aggressively treating these cancers may not be necessary.
- Finding a growth on the scan, which may or may not be cancer, can cause you distress and affect your quality of life. Many growths found on scans are not cancer.

Please call 1-888-424-2100 to find out if an LDCT scan to screen for lung cancer may be right for you. Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of screening before getting the scan.