

Facts About Lung Cancer

February 2009

What You Should Know

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death in Michigan and in the United States.^{1,2}
- Lung cancer is the most preventable form of cancer death in our society. According to the American Cancer Society, tobacco smokes causes 9 out of 10 cases of lung cancer.
- In 2005 74.4 new cases per 100,000 were diagnosed in Michigan.³
- Michigan ranks 19th in the nation in lung cancer mortality, with 32 states having lower lung cancer mortality rates.²
- Lung cancer screening efforts have not yet been shown to reduce lung cancer deaths. Chest x-rays, checking sputum (spit) under a microscope to look for cancer cells, and fiberoptic examination of the bronchial passages does not find many lung cancers early enough to improve a person's chance for a cure.⁴
- For high-risk patients, low dose spiral computed tomography (CT) scans and molecular markers in sputum have shown some promise in detecting early lung cancer. However, the risks and benefits of screening must be examined when considering such procedures.⁴

Incidence and Mortality

- During 2005, a total of 7,681 men and women in Michigan were diagnosed with lung cancer.³
- The American Cancer Society estimated that 215,020 Americans were diagnosed with lung cancer and 161,840 died of lung cancer in 2008.
- In Michigan, 12.3% of individuals diagnosed with lung cancer in 2005 were between the ages of 35 and 54.

Approximately 87.5% were 55 years of age or older.³

- During 2006, a total of 5,816 men and women in Michigan died of lung cancer.¹
- During 2006, more Michigan women died from lung cancer than from breast cancer (2,593 vs. 1,487).¹
- In Michigan, the incidence of lung cancer has declined slightly over the past 10 years. It still exceeds the national incidence rates.^{2,3}

Stage at Diagnosis

- During 2005, only 17.8% of lung cancer cases diagnosed in Michigan were found at a local stage.³
- Although survival is increased when lung cancer is detected and treated early, most cases of lung cancer are diagnosed after it has spread to the lymph nodes and other organs. The five-year survival rate for all stages of lung cancer combined is 15.2%.²

Risk Factors

- Smoking is the leading risk factor for lung cancer. The risk of lung cancer increases with the quantity and duration of cigarette consumption.⁴
- Tobacco use accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths and 87% of lung cancer deaths.⁴
- Nonsmokers who breathe second-hand smoke also have an increased risk of developing lung cancer. Each year, about 3,000 non-smoking adults in the United States die of lung cancer as a result of breathing secondhand smoke.⁴
- Other factors that increase an individual's risk of developing lung cancer include increasing age, a personal history of lung cancer, hookah (water pipe) smoking, radiation treatment to the chest, air pollution,

history of tuberculosis, and exposure to asbestos, radon or other specific cancer-causing agents in the workplace or the environment. Genetics play a contributing role in the development of lung cancer, especially in those who develop the disease at a younger age.⁴

Tobacco Use Behaviors

- Approximately 22.1% of Michigan adults are current smokers. Of current smokers, 23.5% are men and 18.9% are women.⁵
- Michigan residents more likely to smoke are those with lower household incomes and lower education levels.⁵
- Of high school students in Michigan, 17.0% report smoking one or more days in the previous month.⁶
- Among current smokers in Michigan age 18 years and older, 61.6% tried to quit smoking for 1 day or longer in the past year.⁵
- Fifty-seven percent of high school students who currently smoke have tried unsuccessfully to quit.⁶

References:

1. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2006 Michigan Resident Death Files
2. SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2005 National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD
3. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2005 Michigan Cancer Incidence File
4. American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts and Figures 2008
5. Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2007 Data
6. Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2005), Centers for Disease Control, 2006