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## Lung Cancer

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_

Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

NRS  
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- I. The client/caregiver can list some general facts about lung cancer.**
- Lung cancer is the number one cancer killer.
  - Ninety percent of lung cancer patients are smokers.
  - Early lung cancer may have no signs or symptoms.
  - Prognosis improves with early detection.
- II. The client/caregiver can list the two main types of lung cancer.**
- Small cell lung cancer spreads early and occurs mostly in smokers. It occurs in 10% to 25% of lung tumors.
  - Non-small cell lung cancer is more common (accounts for more than 75% of lung cancers). There are four categories of non-small cell lung cancers.
    - Squamous cell carcinoma forms in cells lining the airways. It is the most common type of cancer in men.
    - Adenocarcinoma usually begins in the mucous-producing cells. It is the most common type of lung cancer seen in women and in people who have never smoked.
    - Large cell carcinoma originates in the peripheral part of the lungs.
    - Bronchoalveolar carcinoma is an uncommon type of cancer and it tends to grow more slowly.
- III. The client/caregiver can list factors that increase the risk of lung cancer.**
- Smoking is the greatest risk factor.
  - Current or former women smokers have a greater risk.
  - Risk increases with exposure to secondhand smoke.
  - Risk increases with exposure to asbestos, radioactive dusts, arsenic, and plastics.

NRS  
DATE INITIAL

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- Black Americans have a higher risk of lung cancer.
  - Hereditary factors increase the risk.
- IV. The client/caregiver can recognize signs and symptoms of lung cancer.**
- Persistent cough (smoker's cough)
  - Blood in sputum
  - New onset of wheezing in the chest
  - Chest pain
  - Fever
  - Weight loss
  - Repeated episodes of pneumonia or bronchitis
  - Shortness of breath
  - Hoarseness that lasts more than 2 weeks
  - Arm and shoulder pain
- V. The client/caregiver can list measures for prevention of lung cancer.**
- Do not smoke. Quitting can reduce the risk.
  - Avoid secondhand smoke.
  - Test your home for radon.
  - Avoid carcinogens such as vinyl chloride, nickel chromates, and coal products.
  - Eat a healthy diet that includes five to six servings of fruits and vegetables.
  - Have routine health care and report any early signs and symptoms.
- VI. The client/caregiver can list possible treatments of lung cancer.**
- Treatments depend on the type and stage of cancer. Also, your overall health is a factor to consider when planning treatment.
  - Small cell lung cancer has usually spread to other organs by the time it is diagnosed. Surgery is not a treatment option in most

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NRS  
DATE INITIAL

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cases. Chemotherapy and radiation are used.

- C. Surgery is usually the treatment for early stage non-small cell lung cancer. Operations used are
  1. Wedge resection removes the section with tumor.
  2. Lobectomy involves removing an entire lobe of one lung.
  3. Pneumonectomy is when an entire lung is removed.

**VII. The client/caregiver can list measures for management of disease.**

- A. Increase fluid intake to liquefy secretions.
- B. Nutritional measures
  1. Eat a diet that is high in protein and calories.
  2. Eat small, frequent meals rather than three large ones.
  3. Suggest easily digested foods such as soups or broth, rice, toast, baked potatoes, and so forth.
  4. Avoid rich or spicy foods.
- C. Do not smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- D. Regular exercise balanced with adequate rest.
- E. Report weight loss, increased coughing, pain, fatigue, or blood in sputum to physician.
- F. Reduce stress.
- G. Keep follow-up appointments with physician.

NRS  
DATE INITIAL

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**VIII. The client/caregiver can list possible complications.**

- A. Atelectasis (collapse of lung)
- B. Pneumonia
- C. Metastasis (especially small cell tumors) to brain, bones, liver, and so forth

**RESOURCES**

The National Cancer Institute  
800-4-CANCER or 800-422-6237  
[www.cancer.gov/](http://www.cancer.gov/)

American Cancer Society  
800-227-2345  
[www.cancer.gov/](http://www.cancer.gov/)

Support groups  
Smoking cessation

The Office of the Surgeon General  
[www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/index.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/index.html)  
[www.smokefree.gov/](http://www.smokefree.gov/)

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