

# MAYO CLINIC HEALTH LETTER

Reliable Information for a Healthier Life

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## Lung cancer

### A look at risks and prevention

You know all those years of smoking weren't good for your health. And even though you quit a long time ago, the years that you worked in an office where people routinely lit up only increases your concern.

You wonder if it's too late to do something that might reduce your risk of lung cancer.

Even if you have never had significant smoke exposure, there are steps you can take to protect your lungs. Read on to learn about lung cancer risks and prevention strategies.

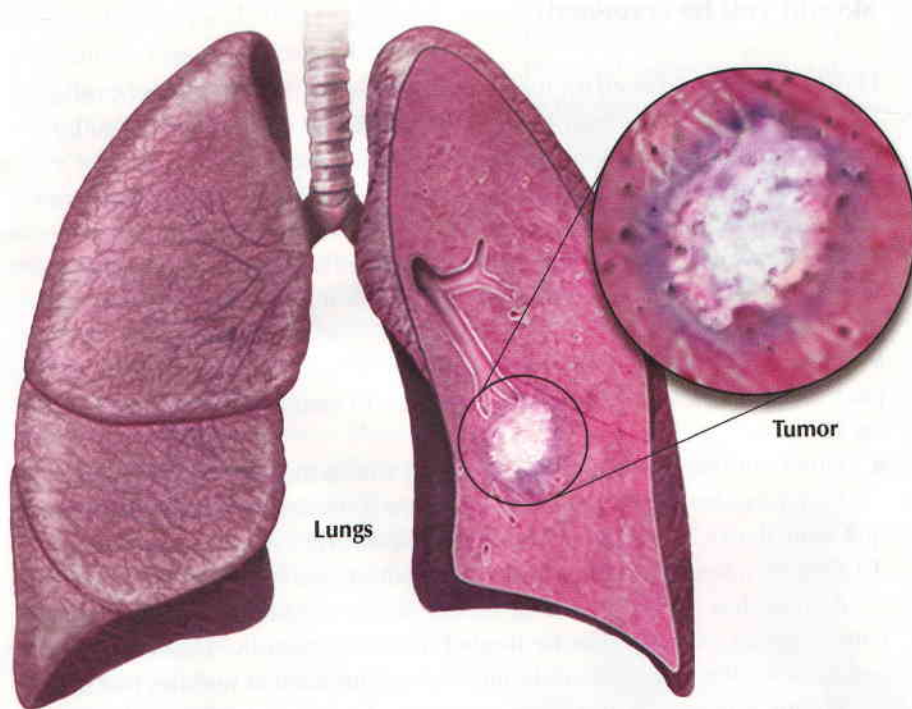
### Risk factors

Lung cancer accounts for 1 in 4 cancer-related deaths. Smoking is by far the greatest risk factor for lung cancer, contributing to 85 percent of lung cancer deaths in the U.S. Your risk increases with the number of cigarettes, pipes or cigars you smoked each day and the number of years you smoked.

But even if you've never smoked or you quit a long time ago, you may still be at risk.

Other factors that increase your risk of lung cancer include:

- *Exposure to secondhand smoke* — Even if you don't smoke, your risk of lung cancer increases if you're exposed to smoke from others.
- *Exposure to radon gas* — Radon is produced by the natural breakdown of



In its early stages, lung cancer typically doesn't cause any signs or symptoms. Any warning signs generally occur when the cancer is more advanced.