

## PATIENT & CARE PARTNER [ACT]IVATION TIPS

An [ACT]IVATED patient is informed, empowered, and engaged in their care.

Last Updated: June 2024

- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "If you are eligible for lung cancer screening, then that should be available from VA. And if you have smoked ever in your lifetime, please talk to your primary care provider to ask if lung cancer screening is right for you." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "If you have cancer, then you should be taken care of in a way which addresses your needs regardless of what the availability is within the VA system. VA sometimes cannot take care of all patients with cancer, and in that case, VA will purchase a service in the community." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "If you have cancer and are getting treatment from the VA, please ask your provider if there's a clinical trial that might be appropriate for you. That might be at the VA or somewhere else, and both of those would be appropriate to consider to understand what the advantages and disadvantages would be for you, including being able to improve the knowledge that would help future people who also face the same diagnosis." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "Make sure you understand the histologic type of cancer that you have. So ask, what does it look like under the microscope, and what molecular tests have been done on your tumor, and what do those results look like, and how do they impact the different therapies that would be offered to you?" - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "If you have a concern about whether you've been exposed to something that increases your risk for or stage of lung cancer, please talk to your primary care provider about whether a screening test would be appropriate for you." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "Many types of lung cancers need to be treated in a way which involves different members of the healthcare team, and that care needs to be coordinated especially when part of the care is being received in different health systems. So when you have a test in one location, those results need to get to everyone else who's involved in that patient's care. Make sure that your providers are aware that you've had a test and that you see the results of that test, so that that way, you know that the test was done, and somebody has a report, and that way it's more likely that that is going to be in front of your providers." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "Be sure to ask your provider, whether your tumor has been tested for molecular tests, and if so, what the results of those tests are, and how that impacts the treatment of your cancer." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "If you have advanced lung cancer, ask your provider, what testing has been done on my tumor, what are the results, and what does that mean for my treatment?" - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "If you have a financial or emotional concern or a barriers like distance to treatment, anxiety or stress, please talk to your care team. There are many resources that the VA has that will try to address any challenge that you are facing." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "If you are experiencing a challenge in working with the VA healthcare system, please communicate that to someone at the VA. That could be your provider, that could be the patient advocate. Every VA hospital has a patient advocate, or that could be someone else at the medical center. We want to know how we can help you in what problems you're experiencing." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley
- [ACT]IVATION TIP:** "There should be nothing that any patient ever asks or brings up to us that is offensive to us. Your concern is our concern. So don't be afraid to ask for it. My biggest concern is that you won't let me know you have a concern." - Dr. Michael J. Kelley

## PRECISION MEDICINE FOR LUNG CANCER VETERANS

**To make sure you are receiving precision medicine/targeted therapies for your lung cancer, ask your doctor:**

- What molecular alterations are in my tumor?
- What types of proteins are expressed on the surface of my tumor?
- If you are not comfortable doing molecular testing or interpreting the results, are you willing to collaborate with the VA's National Precision Oncology Program?
  - This program will provide the test and interpret the results to help your doctor determine the right targeted therapy.

## RESOURCES

- [Patient Empowerment Network](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [Cancer Care](#)
- [GO2 for Lung Cancer](#)
- [My Lung Cancer Team](#)
- [VA Community Care](#)
- [VA Computer Vision and Machine Learning in Precision Oncology](#)
- [VA-Sponsored Clinical Trials](#)
- [VA PACT Act](#)
- [VA Mental Health Program](#)
- [VA National Oncology Program](#)

## CLINICAL TRIALS FOR LUNG CANCER VETERANS

Veterans often have other diseases, in addition to lung cancer, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. It's important that veterans enroll in clinical trials where other comorbidities are studied so researchers know if it's safe to use these treatments on people with comorbidities. Find a VA-Sponsored clinical trial [here](#).

## LUNG CANCER VETERANS CHECKLIST

- 1. **Initial Appointment:** Discuss diagnosis, stage, treatment options.
- 2. **Biomarker Screenings:** Request biomarker testing for treatment guidance.
- 3. **Treatment Team:** Choose oncologist and treatment center in VA system. Use [VA's Community Care Network](#).
- 4. **Clinical Trials:** Explore options for clinical trials with your care team.
- 5. **Open Communication:** Discuss fears and concerns openly. Do not hesitate to seek 2nd or 3rd opinions.
- 6. **Financial Support.** Explore VA's financial assistance options as well as other community financial support options.
- 7. **Veteran Support Network.** Join [VA's Community Care Network](#).
- 8. **Healthy Lifestyle.** Maintain balanced diet, moderate exercise, stress management. [Reference VA's wellness programs](#).
- 9. **Stay Informed.** Learn about lung cancer through [VA's resources and education programs](#). [\[Source, Source\]](#)

© 2024 Patient Empowerment Network, a 501(c)(3) Public Charity