

NON-SMALL CELL LUNG CANCER FACTS

- NSCLC in Veterans:** NSCLC accounts for 80-85% of lung cancer cases. Veterans have higher incidences.
- Risk Factors:** The highest risk factors are age and smoking. Other risk factors include exposure to toxic chemicals.
- Early Detection:** Veterans over 50 with a significant tobacco smoking history may be eligible to participate in a lung screening program to detect lung cancer as soon as it develops.
- Biomarkers:** your doctors should check your lung cancers for biomarkers that can help doctors pick the best treatments
- Targeted Therapies and Immunotherapy:** these are newer types of treatments for lung cancer that are often safer and more effective than conventional chemotherapy

[Sources: 1, 2, 3]

NSCLC RESOURCES

- [Conquer](#)
- [Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [My Lung Cancer Team](#)
- [GO2 for Lung Cancer](#)
- [Cancer Care](#)
- [VA Community Care](#)
- [VA National Oncology Program](#)

Last Updated: April 2024

PATIENT & CARE PARTNER TIPS

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "Once a veteran is diagnosed with lung cancer, they should ask their clinicians, 'Is my cancer the spreading type or not?' Because that really helps everyone better understand why different types of treatments are being recommended." - Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "If you know any veterans who smoked a lot of cigarettes, please encourage them to get their lungs screened and help them ask their primary care doctor to enroll them in a lung cancer screening program. The reason is that lung cancer is curable when caught early. Veterans who undergo lung cancer screening scans every year have the highest chance of being diagnosed early enough to be cured with surgery or stereotactic radiation therapy." - Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "The most important thing for anybody with lung cancer to do is first find a team of cancer specialists whom they trust and who are able to show how much they care about you." - Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "Veterans who receive care outside the VA often have a different experience than those who receive care at a VA medical center. This is because the staff at civilian hospitals might not know much about what it means to have served in the military. I encourage all veterans to be patient with civilian hospital staff and take the time needed to help them appreciate the unique needs that veterans might have, since their only understanding about serving in the military might come from the movies." - Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "Study after study has shown that the quality of care received by veterans in the VA is equal to or superior to that received in the community. We need more Veterans to be aware of this fact. If you're a veteran diagnosed with lung cancer, please check in with the VA to see how they might be able to help you. This is especially important since lung cancer care is complicated and requires multiple specialties that the VA can help ensure you have access to." - Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "Veterans who served in a combat zone or spent time on a military base where there may have been a lot of toxic chemicals should already know they need to pay more attention to their health. But if they forget, this is a reminder to please let your primary care doctor know about your environmental exposures so they can schedule appropriate health screening tests that could save your life." - Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "Almost every type of treatment for lung cancer has improved in the past decade. This includes radiation therapy which is safer and more effective than ever before. Today's radiation therapy technologies provide a great treatment option that often helps Veterans avoid the risks of surgery whenever it might not be safe." Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "Veterans have made a significant contribution to advancing lung cancer care through their participation in clinical trials. There are many opportunities to enroll in a clinical trial to help other veterans who will be diagnosed in the future. This includes participating in a study open at a VA medical center or at a community hospital. As a reminder, whenever enrolling in a trial, patients are essentially gaining access to what we believe are the best treatment options available at this time." Dr. Moghanaki

[ACT]IVATION TIP: "Veterans with lung cancer might need a lot of support to receive the best care. This is one of many reasons why all Veterans with lung cancer should check in with their local VA to see if they qualify for assistance. If eligible, the VA can help not only with medical bills and benefits but also with transportation, housing, meal stipends, and even caregiver support." - Dr. Moghanaki

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]